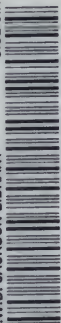


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THE AUTHOR AND HIS HORSE RUBBERNECK

As he appeared in the Mountains of North Carolina on his second investigation.

THE CHILD THAT TOILETH NOT

THE STORY OF A GOVERNMENT INVESTIGATION
THAT WAS SUPPRESSED

BY

THOMAS ROBINSON DAWLEY, JR.,

*Former Special Agent, Bureau of Labor, Department of Commerce
and Labor, Washington, D. C.*

WITH ONE HUNDRED AND TWENTY-ONE ILLUSTRATIONS
FROM ORIGINAL PHOTOGRAPHS

*"They toil not, neither do they spin,"
"Even Solomon in all his glory
Was not arrayed like one of these."*

POPULAR EDITION

NEW YORK
GRACIA PUBLISHING COMPANY
PUBLISHERS

Copyright, 1912

By THOMAS ROBINSON DAWLEY, JR.
NEW YORK CITY

Second Edition Published
in April, 1913.
GRACIA PUBLISHING COMPANY.

TO THE
CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES
OF AMERICA,

who with an appropriation of three hundred thousand dollars authorized the investigation of conditions under which women and children are employed throughout the country, and in particular to those legislators who believe the economic laws of the universe can be upset and the people forming our great Republic, made healthy, wealthy, and wise by legislation,—this book is respectfully dedicated,

The Author.

September, 1912.

AUTHOR'S PREFACE

TO THE SECOND EDITION.

In prefacing the second edition of this work, it seems pertinent to explain that in writing the book, I made no attempt to write a report of my investigations for the government, as some of my critics seem to think. I could not have very well done this had I desired to do so, because the data necessary for writing such a report, having been confiscated by the authorities, were not available. My aim, however, was to write a readable book relating in a plain, matter of fact way, those things which impressed me most in my travels, exploring what was to me a virgin field. In attempting this I was aided by what my friends seem to think an extraordinary memory, and by a mind trained through years of keen observation to see and think, unhampered by any preconceived ideas to confirm or to destroy. I wrote my story as it revealed itself to me, drawing on my imagination for nothing, but on the contrary aiming to depict to my readers those scenes, people and conditions as I saw them. How well I was to succeed in doing this was problematical, for I am well aware that all of us do not see alike, and what may appear as the truth to one, may appear false to another. But the result has been not only highly gratifying to me, but far in excess of any anticipation on my part. Those who have praised my book most, are those who are most familiar with the people and scenes I described, while adverse criticisms come from those who do not know, and invectives from those who, whether ignorant of the conditions or not, find it a matter of self interest—a matter of self preservation in some instances, not to have the truth revealed.

Amid the ceaseless struggle for self preservation that goes on in our teeming populated centers, few men or women are to be found who are willing to sacrifice personal gain or even personal comfort, for a principle. So true is this that when one has the hardihood to step out of the beaten tract and declare himself for what he believes is the truth, a motive is sought for his temerity, and usually a mercenary motive is attributed to him. I anticipated that the motive for my book would be attributed to my working for those who are represented as getting dividends from child labor, and I am well aware that attempts to do this were made by those interests that gain their livelihood by their misrepresentations of child labor conditions, and which were the instigators of the investigation that made the writing of this book a possibility. When they found that they could not possibly establish any connection between me and the cotton-mill owners, they alleged that I was discharged from the government service, thus imputing some irregularity of conduct on my part, and that the book was the result of vindictiveness. The fact was that when I was confronted with the purpose of the Commissioner of Labor, not to make public the results of my investigations, I tendered him my resignation, setting forth in writing that when it came to a matter of sacrificing a principle affecting the welfare of perhaps five million of our people, in order to meet the requirements of a salaried office, there remained but one thing for me to do, and that was to sacrifice the office.

The motive for writing my book was a matter of principle. I had seen the reports of good men and women suppressed, side-tracked or re-written, to meet the requirements of the special interests that more or less controlled the administration of the Bureau of Labor under its regime. I knew that the public had been fairly stuffed with lies respecting the employment of children. I knew of two good women at least, who had been sent down into the mill villages of the South, at different times, to report on the conditions, by the editor of one of our high class magazines, and because they found entirely different

conditions from those represented, not a line of their work was published, yet the editor is looked upon as an unimpeachable citizen standing for everything that is good and clean in our national and social welfare. In my own case, after my severance from the Bureau of Labor, I could not get my views published by these holier-than-thou editors, showing how the condition of the poor children who do get jobs in the cotton-mills of the South, are improved thereby. Determined not to be suppressed, I kept on with dog-like persistency, seeking funds here and there with which to make my revelations, finally selling my farm in Connecticut, in order to do so. And yet it has been declared that my book was written at the instigation of the cotton-mill men and that I am a liar, by a millionaire manufacturer who made his money selling soap, and now poses as a reformer.

My determination not to be suppressed, was not my only motive for writing the book. My thoughts constantly reverted to those poor people in the mountains whose only chance for betterment are the opportunities opened up to them by the manufacturing industries that may give them employment. I seemed to hear the cries of their children from their dismal abodes. My thoughts reverted to their half starved bodies and miserable diet of crude corn meal and fat pork, and I could see their begrimed faces and partially clothed bodies draped in filthy rags. I could recall the pleadings of those who had tasted of the benefits accrued from light employment in a cotton-mill, pleading to be allowed to return to the mill from which they had been legislated by the preachings of those well-meaning reformers who preach from the house tops, merely looking down upon the great masses of humanity struggling for existence, on the one hand, and those hired mercenaries on the other, who propagate their doctrines because they are paid to do so. To have allowed the truth as I found it, to be suppressed without protest, would have made of me in my own mind little else than a scoundrel.

Some of my critics confound the issue by alleging that I op-

pose the betterment of our poor people of the mountains, through any other means than employment in a cotton-mill, but such allegations are as far fetched as they are far from the truth. I say to all our professional reformers, agitators and educators alike, give them something better if you will,—take them from their homes of misery, squalor and ignorance, and educate them. Put them to live in palaces if you will, or take them into your own homes—build schools for them and educate them, but do not close the only means open to them for improving their conditions as they are.

As to my own infallibility in presenting these pages, I make no pretense whatsoever. There are errors in the book, many of them no doubt, some of which I have endeavored to correct in this edition, but on this point, I can do no better than quote from the letter of a distinguished publicist in the South, unknown to me, who in writing to the editor of a religious publication in New York, said;

“I can personally vouch for the accuracy of the general trend of the whole story as to labor conditions, the mill people, and the mountain people. Here and there are some small mistakes, but broadly the story is a correct one.”

T. R. D., Jr.

New York, April, 1903.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	Page
I. The Beveridge Speech.	1
II. Begining a Government Investigation	9
III. My First Cotton-Mill.	15
IV. Poverty in the Mill Village.	30
V. Enforcement of the School Law.	40
VI. Working with Schedules.	51
VII. The Cotton-Mill Versus the Farm.	59
VIII. The Question of Wages.	71
IX. In Search of Bad Mill-Conditions.	85
X. Pelzer and Its Despotism.	99
XI. A Mountain County	115
XII. Cotton Spnining Versus Moonshining	125
XIII. Viewed from Different Angles	142
XIV. The Homes of the Mountaineers	154
XV. Among the Clansmen.	168
XVI. They Toil Not, Neither Do They Spin	181
XVII. Reports of the Families Gone to the Mills	193
XVII. Back to Marshall.	207
XIX. Thou Shalt Not Toil, Neither Shalt Thou Spin	222
XX. Some Conditions in East Tennessee	236
XXI. The Chilhowee Mountains	249
XXII. Some Other Rural Conditions	262
XXIII. The Bureau of Labor	278
XXVI. The Second Investigation	294
XXV. The Mountain Problem	303
XXVI. Some Incidents of Mountain Travel	316
XXVII. Egypt	338
XXVIII. A Journey in Sodom	356
XXIX. The Dark Corner	377
XXX. The Story of Piedmont Mills	404
XXXI. Welfare Work	420
XXXII. Good and Bad Mills and Their Work	441
XXXIII. The Government and the Interests	474

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

	Page
The Author and His Horse Rubberneck	Frontispiece
My First Cotton-Mill	8
I Discover That The Cotton-Mill Runs a Kindergarten	16
A Child Spinner	19
I Learn That Children Reared at a Cotton-Mill Look Different	22
A Class in Arithmetic at the Cotton-Mill	26
Cotton-Mill Boys Amusing Themselves	28
Where Other Mills Are Doing More	29
Proverty on the Farm	34
On the Farm They All Have to Work	37
"They Did Not Own No Farm "	45
"They Always Looked Like That "	47
As Some of Them Live on the Farm	55
"If the Land Had not Washed Away "	60
Where They Came From	62
How They Are Improved at the Mills	66
A Tenant Family on the Yadkin River	69
"Uncle Billy," a Type of the Idle Father	75
Types of Village Loafers	79
"As the Log Cabins in Which He Lived "	82
Girl Toilers as They Appeared at The Liledoun Mills	89
An Alexander County Farmer	98
But Thy Are Learning to Cook at Pelzer	100
One of the Homes of Pelzer's Downtrodden	104
One of the Results of Pelzer and Its Despotism	106
View in Pelzer Park	110
Ready at Their Country's Call	112
How the Camera Lies	113
Where the Land is so Steep	118
Where Moonshining is a Thing of the Past	123
How Marshall Has Grown	127
Product of Isolation, Ignorance and Vice	131
Where the Cotton-Mill Goes Up Moonshining Goes Down	135

Doffer Boys Who Earn as Much as School Teachers	139
The Little Mill Down on the River	141
"In the Good Old Summer Time"	144
Children in Madison County	147
Type of Mill Cottage Near Marshall	150
Starting Out	154
Type of Old-Fashioned Farm House near Marshall	155
General Appearance of the Cabins Improved	158
Married at Thirteen	161
"Her Father and Sisters, Who Hoed and Planted Corn"	163
"Ensconced a Respectable Looking Farm-House"	165
"Trail Down the Mountain to the Nearest Grist-Mill"	169
Shelton-Laurel Family	174
"Resting From Their Labor"	176
Vicie, Her Child and Neighbor's Children	178
A Decadent Family	180
No Hope for These	182
"Race Suicide Infinitely Worse Than Theodore Roosevelt's"	187
Home of Christopher Columbus Waldrop	189
Such Abodes as are Usually Near the Tops of the Mountains	194
Confederate Veteran's Home	200
Mountaineer's Team Feeding	202
Dwelling in Mine Fork District	204
Home of Father, Mother and Thirteen Children	210
Tenant Family's Cabin	214
Family Consisting of Father, Mother and Fifteen Children	218
Waiting for His Congregation	220
As They Appear in the Mills	226
An Entirely Different Scene from Squalor and Poverty	228
"Thou Shalt Not Work"	231
Same Children at the Cotton-Mill	233
Not Only Lawless But Lazy	242
A Child of the Mountains	244
A Typical Cabin in the Woods	250
The Chief Citizen of the Chilhowee Mountains	253
Grist-mill in the Solitude of the Chilhowee Mountains	258
A Home in Happy Valley	260
Where Poverty, Ignorance and Immorality Prevail	265
Aged Grandmother Left with Nine Children	267
Where Tradition Says Nancy Hanks Served as a House-Girl	271
A Root Digger Washing Roots	275
Graded School Building and Village Street	279
Such Child Toilers as These were Found	285

Mill Kindergarten and Playgrounds	290
Old Patriarch's Cabin and Blacksmith Shop	306
A Cabin on the Steep Mountain Side	308
A Dense Population and no Industries	311
Baptist Preacher's Home	313
Girls on a Mountain Farm Planting Corn	320
Home of Young Married Couple	322
Disreputable House Near the Tennessee Line	328
The "Little Eyed Madcaps"	332
Some of the Children	333
Specimens of Cora's Handwriting	334
Cora at the Cotton-Mill	335
"Double Log Cabin That Had Seen Better Days"	343
Farm in Egypt	346
A Family of Deaf-Mutes	349
Will Ann Hensley's New House	351
Man and Wife, and Their Home	354
Having Their Picture Taken	358
Pisen Field District School	360
The Rev. Pink Sellers	366
A Young Mother Drying Roots	371
Parson Pate and Lily on Her Gray Nag	373
Gone ! Gone to the Cotton-Mill	382
The Dark Corner Burying-Ground	390
Pinkey Delivering the Mail	394
The Church Shot Full of Holes	397
Family of Moonshiners	399
The Deacon of Boo-Goo-Land	402
A Product of the Dark Corner	407
Village Street at Piedmont	412
A Kindergarten Class and Teacher at Piedmont	419
How the Big Cotton-Mills Solved the Educational Problem	427
The One Highly Prized and Much Cherished Creature the Family Cow	431
School House Costing Twenty-five Thousand Dollars	435
Hook-Worm Suspects Such as Dr. Stiles Found	438
A True Product of the Cotton-Mill	439
Type of House in the Cotton Belt	443
One of the Oldest Mills in the South	445
Five Little Sisters on the Farm	449
Typical Group of Doffer Boys	453
The Child's-Garden at Columbus	458
Sunday School Class of Mill Children	463
The Best Farm House in Twenty-five Miles	469
Recreation of Cotton-Mill Girls	473
Cotton-Mill Family at Home	478

The Child That Toileth Not

CHAPTER I.

THE BEVERIDGE SPEECH.

IN the latter part of January, 1907, Senator Albert J. Beveridge, of Indiana, in pleading for a Federal child-labor law, addressed the United States Senate in a speech extending over parts of three days, in which he arraigned in most scathing terms the conditions under which children are forced to work in mines, factories and sweatshops. He called their employment "child slavery," and declared that there were at least a million of these child slaves bound to toil in our various industries throughout the country. Pointing out some of the conditions represented as existing among these child toilers in the glass-factories and coal-breakers of Pennsylvania, where they are said to be bad enough, he took up the conditions in the silk-mills, where one of the typical scenes depicted was that of a little girl toiling at a loom, upon which "the threads tangled and the tangles were always worst" when the child " 'was tireddest,' " quoting the little girl's own words. Then, too, the big girl who had charge of the department would scold her, and the night superintendent would threaten to discharge her, if she could not do better, and her head would ache sometimes awfully, and she would have to cry, and then some other girl would straighten out the tangle for her.

He then passed on to the employment of children in cotton-mills where similar scenes were pictured and commented

upon. Little children were represented as working in dye-houses at vats of poisonous dyes, and it was said that they could be tracked to their homes, after their day's toil was over, by the dripping of the dye in the snow, from their little bodies and clothing saturated with the poisonous colors. These child toilers, as represented, were the "infant factor slaves," who could "never develop into men and women."

It was represented that capitalists, responsible for these conditions, were little less than human monsters living upon the lives of the children whom they employed because they could get their labor cheaper than that of adults. To bear out these representations, the statement of one well-known writer was presented, in which he alleged that there are no mortality statistics at the mills showing the awful death harvest of these infantile factory slaves, and that the mill-owners baffled all attempts of the outside public to get at the facts, but, in the opinion of this writer, whose testimony was sworn to, "in many of the mills death sets the little prisoners free inside of four years." The same witness of these outrages presented a word picture of the mill children in the mills as "unable to sit at their task" and "having to pace back and forth, watching with inanimate, dull look the flying spindles, the roar of the machinery drowning every other sound, as back and forth paced the baby toilers in their bare feet, mending the broken threads."

Not only were such statements repeated throughout the speech, but the greater part of it was made up of them with affidavits purporting to sustain them. One sworn to by Arthur F. Cushman, who said he had investigated conditions most carefully, is particularly worthy of note. He declared that in five of the million-dollar cotton-mills at Lewiston, Maine, "human lives are being blotted out and crushed; human ambitions are being stifled, not because the children are not smart, not because they are not good, not because they are not willing to work, but because mill-owners must have their dividends, mill-owners must grind their dividends out of the flesh

and blood, out of the intellects and souls, not of grown men, not always even of women, but of children."

Continuing with such testimony, and intent upon showing the enormous number of little human lives thus being crushed out by the greed of the mill-owners, some figures were quoted and deductions made to show the probable number of children employed in some of our cities and states, to which the Senator added the statement that even the "figures do not tell the story of tired eyes, wasted, pinched bodies, drooping heads and dragging feet." Making reference to the fact that these were children of foreigners, nevertheless the future citizens of this Republic, he passed on to "a section of the country where this evil is greatest and most shameful," he said, and where "it is practised upon the purest American strain that is found in this country—the children in the southern cotton-mills." "Their fathers fought at Guilford Court House and Cowpens," said he, "and followed Marion to victory," their blood never having been adulterated from that day to this. He pointed out the well-known fact that these southern children are capable of infinite development, "but," said he, "the children are not being developed. The mills are being developed," and then he declared his intention to show by the actual testimony of personal investigators, that, instead of being developed, these children are being ruined by tens of thousands. Pages of testimony followed, backed up with the affidavits of the investigators showing how wan, pale-faced little children of six and seven years are working in these cotton-mills for twelve hours daily, with only half an hour for rest at noon, and it was even said, "are sometimes kept awake by the vigilant superintendent with cold water dashed in their faces." The names of such writers, social workers, and investigators as Miss Ashby, Mrs. Van Vorst, Mrs. Kelley, Elbert Hubbard, John Spargo, Kellogg Durland, Owen R. Lovejoy, and A. J. McKelway, were presented, all of whom either swore to their statements or expressed a willingness to do so.

The children were pictured as beginning their labors in the mills as young as four years; they were represented as being a fine type of people drawn from farms by the inducements held out to them by the mills through labor agents; at the mills they were half starved, anæmic, underpaid, and even mutilated in the machinery, which was described as "dangerous to life and limb." As they were forced to toil incessantly, the word "play" became lost to their vocabulary; they did not even know how to play. In a word, the mass of testimony presented by the Senator, showing how our little children were being murdered by the greed of our manufacturers, was enough to stigmatize us as a nation of barbarians.

The evidence was positive. There were no "ifs," or "pros," or "cons" about it. It consisted of a long series of statements of alleged facts, subscribed and sworn to evidently by good women, learned men, social workers, school teachers, ministers, doctors of medicine, doctors of philosophy, and even lawyers. With the presentation of such an arrangement of conditions, it seemed that the inside of prison walls would be fit places for the men, whether capitalists, manufacturers or superintendents, responsible for such conditions.

During Senator Beveridge's arraignment of these conditions, there were senators who interrupted him from time to time, some seeking information, some questioning the accuracy of the representations made, and some imputing denials, if not actually denying, the alleged facts presented, but not one was provided with sufficient evidence or definite information to refute them.

In his preroration Mr. Beveridge proclaimed that he was making his plea for Federal legislation inhibiting the employment of children in order "to make this nation still surer of its holy destiny"—"to stop the murder of American children and the ruin of future American citizens." And the galleries applauded.

The day that the Senator concluded this Speech, President Roosevelt signed a joint resolution passed by Congress, direct-

ing the Secretary of Commerce and Labor to investigate and report upon the industrial, social, moral, educational and physical condition of woman and child-workers in the United States, wherever employed, with special reference to their age, hours of labor, term of employment, health, illiteracy, sanitary and other conditions surrounding their occupation, and the means employed for the protection of their health, person and morals. To carry out the provisions of this act, the sum of one hundred and fifty thousand dollars was appropriated, to be immediately available, provided that no part of it be expended for the employment of any person in making the investigations, who was not already in the employment of the Government, unless regularly appointed for the work after competitive examination and certification through the Civil Service Commission. Subsequently a second appropriation of one hundred and fifty thousand dollars was made, making in all a total of three hundred thousand dollars, to investigate the conditions under which women and children are employed throughout the United States.

Senator Beveridge's speech was the culmination of a systematic campaign carried on throughout the country against the employment of children. The writer had become very much interested in the subject, and when it was announced that Congress had directed such an investigation as it seemed the subject demanded, he applied for a position to participate in the work. Informed of the necessary requirements to qualify for the position he filed his application papers with the Civil Service Commission, and in due time took the necessary examination in competition with many others.

As the results of this examination, of some five hundred applicants examined throughout the country, there were only ten successful ones qualifying for appointment with an A rating, and of these, the writer was the only one not having a college degree. Furthermore, it was learned that the Commissioner of Labor wanted only trained scientists on the work, and in order to get such trained scientists as he desired, he ar-

ranged with the Civil Service Commission to allow him to appoint two of his Bureau Chiefs to assist in the rating of the papers of the applicants examined, the Civil Service Commission being represented by one examiner only. In the rating of the papers, it was stipulated by the Commissioner of Labor, that an applicant having a college education should receive approximately one-third more credit marks than those not graduated from some college, irrespective of any other qualifications shown by the examination papers.

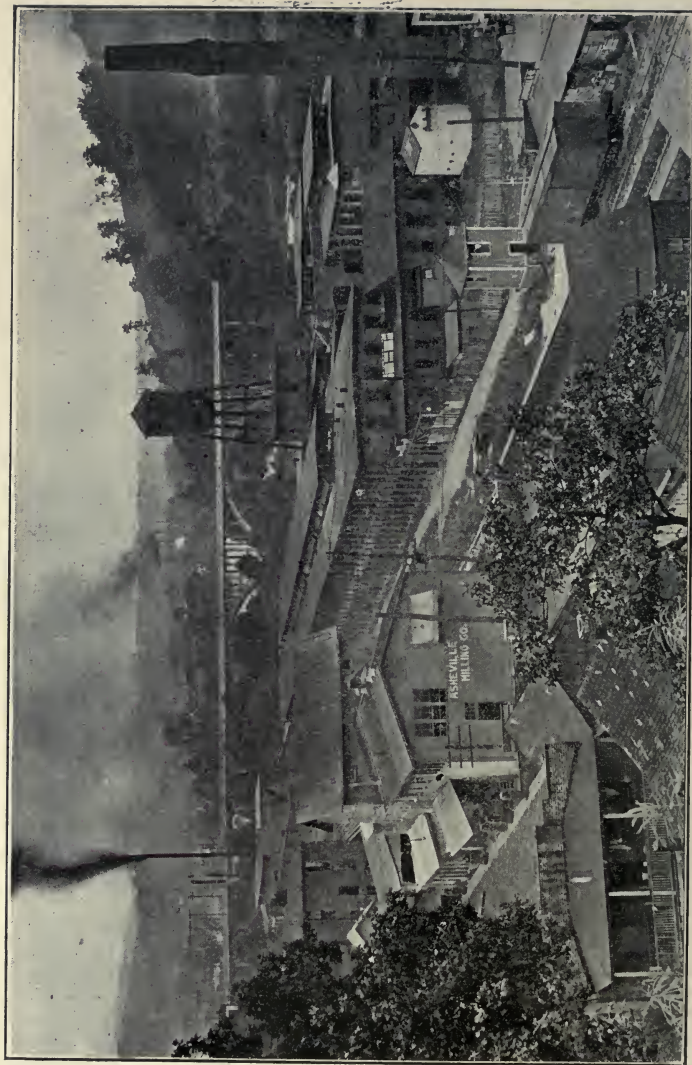
The writer, notwithstanding his not having been graduated from college, having duly qualified for appointment, the Commissioner of Labor demurred at assigning him to the work, giving his reason as that his examination papers showed an experience and an ability for doing things far above that possessed by any of his subordinates already in the service, or any of those who had successfully passed the competitive examination. He emphasized his view of the matter by stating that the writer's assignment to the work would be like hitching a race-horse alongside of a donkey.

While the writer was willing to admit that he was a donkey seeking a donkey's job, the Commissioner declared that he meant to infer that he was the race-horse. To this the writer replied by reminding the Commissioner that the time comes when the race-horse plays out, in which case he may be glad to accept the donkey's job.

During the discussion which lasted upwards of an hour or more, the question was put to the Commissioner: Did he want facts developed by the investigation, or did he want to sustain some fixed policy or propaganda? If he wanted facts, the writer assured him that he would gather the facts, irrespective of creeds or policies, but if he wanted only those facts gathered that would sustain some fixed policy, the writer stated frankly that he was not the man to be appointed on the work. To this the Commissioner replied that he wanted facts and facts only, in proof of which he agreed to recommend the writer for appointment, and the appointment soon followed.

In the ensuing pages it is purposed by the writer to give a narrative of his part in the woman and child labor investigation that followed, with an account of some of the results obtained, and subsequent incidents in his career as a Government investigator. In view of the many facts developed by the investigation, and the suppression of the same by that branch of the Government authorized to secure them, he feels that it is a duty he owes the public in making them known. Not only that, but the investigation developed a series of misrepresentations so gross in their entirety as fairly to astound an unbiased mind, and cause one to pause in wonder at the extent to which we are often led blindly by propaganda, which in its inception may have a good cause to sustain, but, upon becoming the means of subsistence for those who make its furtherance their source of livelihood, degenerates into chicanery and blinds even those who have eyes to see and hearts to feel, and who honestly desire to lift the fallen, strengthen the weak, alleviate suffering, and at least leave the world better than they found it.

Further than this, it is not only the Nation's right to know the truth, but our law-makers should not be led into basing their legislative acts upon representations that are as false as it is in the power of the human mind to make them.



MY FIRST COTTON-MILL, WHERE I EXPECTED TO UNCOVER THE EVILS OF CHILD LABOR
The dingy old mill down on the river, with its soot-covered chimneys and smoke, did not form altogether a happy picture.

CHAPTER II.

BEGINNING A GOVERNMENT INVESTIGATION.

HAVING duly received my appointment as a Special Agent of the Bureau of Labor to investigate the conditions under which women and children are obliged to toil, I was informed that it had been decided to assign me to one of the most important, if not the most important phase of the entire investigation. It was explained briefly that the cotton-mills of the South drew their labor from the rural districts, chiefly in the mountains of North and South Carolina, Tennessee, Georgia and Alabama. In view of this fact I was directed to proceed South and study the conditions of the people living in those districts with the view of ascertaining the effect of factory employment upon them.

Preliminary to my actual work in the field I was sent to the Congressional Library to read up on the subject. Without difficulty I found many books, printed speeches and magazine articles telling of the poor, overworked mother in the factory, and the anæmic, half-starved child, stunted in growth and deprived of an education, all because the factory owners must get their dividends from the product of their toil. One book in particular, written by a well-known socialist, described mothers in a horrible state of depravity and degradation, and children surrounded by immorality and vice, all due to factory employment. In a printed address that had been delivered by the Commissioner of Labor himself, little children were referred to as "the pallid, overworked, stunted child of the mill or factory"—"as an example of the evil of child labor," and "that anything short of this pitiful, this shocking little human

figure fails to draw our particular attention." Following these statements he referred to the National Child Labor Committee, as dedicating its unremitting efforts to "the rescue of the little victims emerging in daily procession in and out of the yawning mills, or factories," and he made specific reference to "communities where the mills destroy the little children by thousands."

One writer, a doctor of divinity writing for a well-known magazine, told how families were taken by the train-load from the mountains of North Carolina and Tennessee, to have their children, with all it cost to rear them, ruined at the mills. These mountain people were described as having a "splendid physical inheritance," but at the mills they were physical degenerates, densely ignorant and trifling, living upon the earnings of their little children, who were forced to toil while their fathers loafed. Children as young as five years were represented as toiling during the long hours of man's working day, "mothers of our future race made weary," and all because their services cheapened labor.

There were other writers who described these little toilers as constantly under the vigilant eyes of cruel taskmasters, who would not allow them to sit at their tasks, even though their work might be done fully as well while seated. Their earnings were so meager, it was alleged, that they were not only unable to supply themselves with proper food, but the once splendid farmers drawn from their mountain farms by the inducements offered them of getting wages for every one of their children, were kept at the mills in a state bordering on peonage. Even the wages which were supposed to be paid the children were rarely ever seen, for they were obliged to buy all their necessities of life at the company stores, where the unscrupulous managers generally made their accounts balance with the earnings. The little children deprived of play and education were stunted in growth by their ceaseless toil. The breathing of the foul, lint-laden atmosphere in the mills affected their lungs, and they were not only rendered physical

wrecks, but were frequently maimed and mutilated by the machinery that was dangerous to life and limb. Thus they were hurried into untimely graves.

Having thus informed myself of the conditions at the mills, I was instructed to report to the Expert in Charge of the cotton textile part of the investigation, who was at Charlotte, North Carolina, and under whose directions I should proceed to the mountains and there make an investigation into the conditions of the families on the farms, before they were induced to leave and suffer the awful deteriorating conditions I had read about. Accordingly reporting to the Expert in Charge who was to be my field chief, I was given sets of printed blanks and requested before taking up my study of rural conditions, to investigate the conditions at a little mill at Asheville, using the blanks given me. I was told that it was reported that some of the very worst phases of child labor were exemplified at the mill referred to, particularly with reference to the number of children employed and the effect of factory employment upon them. I was urged to find the children and ascertain their ages, and as the mill-owners would undoubtedly attempt to hide the children where I could not find them upon my announcing myself at their office, I was cautioned to look out for such an emergency, and advised to try and get into the spinning room of the mill before they had a chance to hide the children away, as it was in the spinning room that the children were mostly employed.

With these instructions, and thus cautioned, I started out upon my woman and child labor investigations determined to get the facts. No cotton-mill plutocrat would get the better of me. If I could not get into his mill before he had a chance to hide the poor little children away, I would sit out on his fence and wait until they came out. The mill-owners or managers, or whatever they were, could not keep the little children in the mill forever. Thus I planned.

My journey to Asheville was full of interest. I had never been in our Southern mountains, and the work before me was

like making discoveries in a new territory. I knew absolutely nothing about the country, its conditions or people, beyond the fact that I had heard that there were some very lawless men living in our Southern mountains, who made moonshine whiskey; that there was some missionary work carried on there, and I had been told that there were localities having such bad reputations for murder and whiskey making, that I had better keep away from them. Such stories only excited my spirit of adventure and made me the more anxious to get among the people and learn something about them at first hand.

On the train I met a bright, active young man, who replied to my inquiry for information concerning the mountain people by telling me that he was a mountaineer himself, intimating pleasantly that if I saw any difference in him from people living elsewhere, he would be pleased to know it. He proved to be the District Solicitor for Asheville and surrounding counties, and he freely discussed the points upon which I sought information. With respect to cotton-mills and the effect of factory employment upon the employed, he said he did not know much of his own knowledge, but in his opinion the families living upon farms in the mountains were better off than they would be at the cotton-mills. He told me that there was a law inhibiting labor agents taking labor out of the State, and also a law against any one soliciting employed labor to leave the services of the employers. The law had been rigorously enforced in Asheville for the reason that the cotton-mill management had suffered considerable expense and inconvenience due to labor agents inducing their operatives to leave them by offering better pay and more advantages elsewhere, after the mill management had incurred the expense of securing and training this help green from the farms.

He thought the people in the remote mountain districts had been very much misrepresented by travelers and writers, who knew little or nothing about them, and who looked upon them almost as though they were foreigners and not citizens of the United States. He attributed many of the misrepresen-

tations to missionary workers, who failed to view the poorer class of people in the mountains in their proper light, and while he did not think these religious workers intended to misrepresent facts, they frequently did. As an example he had seen it stated that there were families living in the mountains who had never heard of Jesus Christ, which he did not believe was true. He accounted for such a statement in that many of the very poor mountain people had a great sense of humor, and they sometimes purposely misled the stranger appearing among them, judging by the questions he asked perhaps, that he had very little common sense. A missionary or religious worker might approach one of them in his cabin home, and propound the question, for example,

“Have you ever heard of Jesus Christ?”

The question appearing ridiculous to the mountaineer, would in all probability excite his sense of humor and he might reply by asking,

“Who is Jesus Christ? I don’t know him! He doesn’t live around here.” And seeing that he was taken seriously by the stranger, he might keep up this sort of banter convincing the religious worker, or whoever the stranger might be, that he had never heard of Christ.

He referred to the fact that there are very few negroes in the mountains, and in certain localities their presence is strenuously objected to. He mentioned one incident, when a telephone company was running a trunk line of telephone wires through the mountains, employing negro labor for the purpose, upon entering one of the localities where the negro is objected to, their camp was suddenly assailed in the still hours of night, by a beating of pans, blowing of horns, ringing of cow-bells and shooting of firearms. The negroes suddenly aroused from sleep by the tremendous din thus suddenly set up, fled in all directions.

My afternoon’s journey was rendered very pleasant and interesting by the young attorney and district solicitor, who pointed out from the car window places and scenes of interest.

He described the mountains, and told of improvements that were going on, and discussed political situations as he knew them. Finally when we seemed to have come out of an almost primeval wilderness, and the handsome suburban town of Biltmore burst upon us, he took his leave of me for a clanging trolley car, which he said took him nearer his home than the railroad train. As I left the train a little beyond, taking a carriage up the winding street to the middle of the town, Asheville seemed a beautiful mountain city. There were miles of paved streets, broad drives, electric lights, fine houses, stores and churches. I saw nothing looking like a factory or a cotton-mill, and as I made inquiries for the cotton-mill later on, no one seemed to know definitely that the beautiful city of Asheville had such a thing. Almost every one knew about the anæmic little child workers such as I had read about in the Congressional Library at Washington, but, cotton-mill in Asheville! They seemed to know nothing.

I heard that a doctor with a sanitarium for lunatics, and who habitually dashed through the streets in a shrieking automobile, scaring chickens, and dogs and horses in the suburbs and pedestrians on the street crossings with blasts from his horn, had entered a complaint with the town authorities against "some dirty little old mill down next the river," because its whistle went off at an early hour in the morning waking him and his lunatics up when he thought everybody should be asleep. According to him the cotton-mill was a nuisance and should be abolished. Some one appreciating the humor of the complaint had drawn a cartoon representing him in the automobile with the chickens and dogs flying out from under in all directions, and a poor old scared lady planted in front, not knowing which way to turn, while mighty strokes of the pen radiating from his horn represented its blasts.

CHAPTER III.

MY FIRST COTTON-MILL.

INDEED, as I stood on the brow of the hill at the west end of the city, overlooking the factory district, it did present a disagreeable contrast to the handsome city behind me. The dingy old mill down on the river, with its soot-covered chimneys and smoke, the dull drab houses scattered over the hillside with narrow lanes between them, and the occasional slovenly figure of an untidy woman or slouching man, did not form altogether a happy picture.

While I contemplated the scene, a group of small boys came up the hill. They were sickly looking, presenting that anæmic, or cotton-mill type of which I had heard so much. One of them was walking with a cane, and in reply to my inquiry he said he had "rheumatiz." I pitied the little fellows from the bottom of my heart. It seemed a shame that children so young should be obliged to work, and be made sick in the close confining air of a cotton-mill.

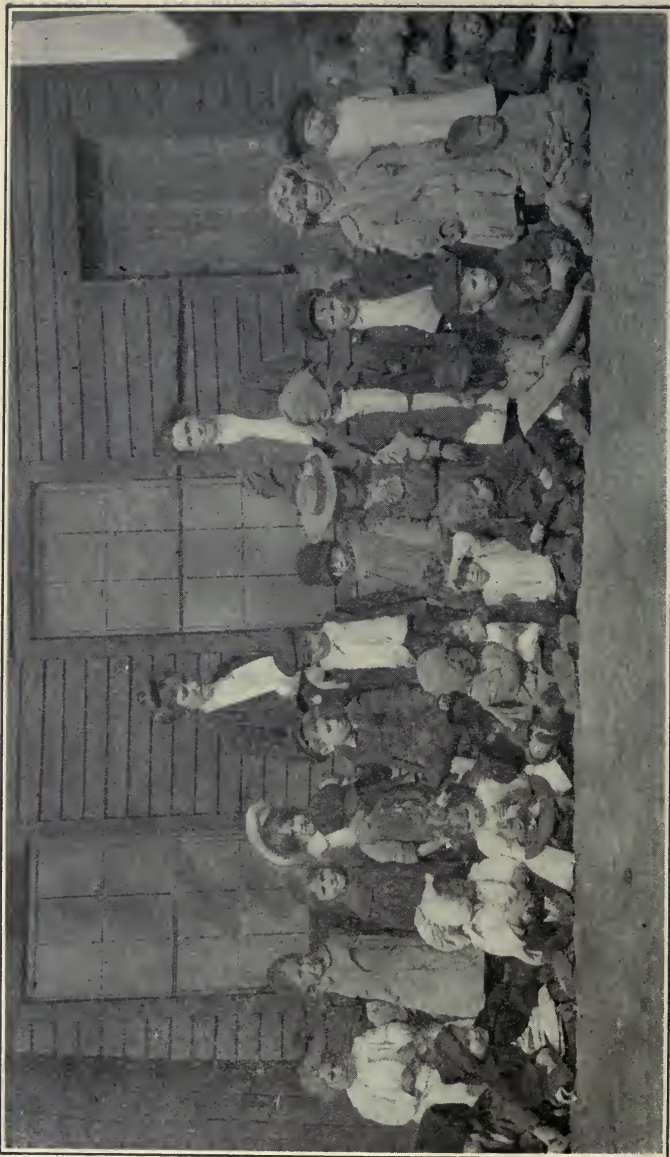
"How long have you been working?" I asked one of them.

"Working!" he exclaimed quizzically.

"Yes," said I, "how long have you been working in the cotton-mill?"

"We hain't never worked in no cotton-mill!" came the reply with an evident air of disgust, and the pale faces forming the group beamed with a gleam of sarcasm.

I had evidently made a mistake, and I walked on wondering. I was planning how to get into the cotton-mill before any of the superintendents or managers had time to hide away the poor little children in there. At the foot of the hill was a



I DISCOVERED THAT THE COTTON-MILL RUNS A KINDERGARTEN

They were mostly children of recent arrivals from the farms, and their mothers were being taught at the expense of the mill how to sew and make things. Note the difference in their appearance from those at the longer established mills where the children are at least a generation removed from the farm.

railroad track with coal and freight cars shunting back and forth. The mill was on the other side of the track, a long two-storied building of dingy brick. At the end nearest me was a small building marked "office," at the door of which I met a stoop-shouldered, little old be-whiskered man whose growth had been stunted in childhood. It seemed to me that he must have worked in a cotton-mill pretty much all his life, so small was he. He proved to be a watchman employed around the mill, and after engaging him in conversation, I asked him whether I could go into the mill.

"Hain't yer been in no mill before?" he asked.

I told him, what was true, that I had not.

"'Spose yer jes' lookin' roun', then," said he interrogatively.

As I assured him that I was, he told me to follow him. He led the way up a broad flight of stairs and ushered me into a room filled with the búzz of machinery. There were many women and girls and children there, and, it seemed to me, comparatively few men. There were great frames of spools with their threads long drawn out, but they did not tangle, and no one seemed to be bothering much about them.

In a vacant space, seated almost in the middle of the floor, three or four small boys attracted my attention. They were shooting a little disk back and forth between them, and as I could not make out just what they were doing, I asked my little old man with the whiskers.

"Oh, they're jes' playin', I reckon," said he.

"Aren't they supposed to be working?" I asked.

"Nah!" he replied, "them kids don't wourk any ter mount t' nuthin'."

"What do you have them for, then?" was my next inquiry.

"Jes' ter doff. When them spools on the spinnin' frames gits full o' yarn, them kids has ter run an' git the spools off quick, an' put on empty ones as quick as they kin, so the machines don't have to stop long." And following the direction he indicated to me, I looked down at the long rows of spinning frames.

From the group of boys on the floor my eyes wandered to another group idling around a big basket, and thence to a little fellow riding on the edge of a box filled with empty bobbins. He was kicking the box along the floor with one foot, as you see boys kick their play-wagons along our city streets. Another little fellow had a big broom and appeared to be sweeping. Indicating these boys, I asked my guide whether he pretended to say that some of them at least were not working, and were they not all carried on the mill pay-rolls.

"Sure," said he, "they all git paid, an' git well paid too, but they play most o' the time."

"But there is that little fellow sweeping," and I indicated the boy with the broom.

"Ah, they jes' give 'im thet broom ter keep 'im from gettin' inter mischief, I reckon. Some o' the kids hev ter hev some-thin' ter do, sometimes, ter keep 'em busy. It only takes 'em about fifteen minutes to empty the spinnin' frames so the machines kin start up agin, an' then the kids hev nothin' ter do till the frames are full agin."

The spinning frames were long iron frames each containing a row of whirring bobbins filling with tiny threads of yarn. Each bobbin was on a spindle very much like the spindle on the end of my grandmother's spinning-wheel, when I was a small boy, only as I remember my grandmother spinning, she stepped back and forth with her roving in one hand while with the other hand she twirled the great wheel that made the spindle whirl, to spin a single thread of yarn. But here in this mill were hundreds of these little spindles in their long frames, spinning away with only girls watching them, and I was constrained to wonder what a yard of cloth would cost if the yarn were spun as in my grandmother's day. I looked closely for the "flying spindles" and "baby toilers" marching "back and forward, mending the broken threads." There were a number of girls standing around or walking up and down, and one or two at least seated on the boxes at the end

of the frames, watching the machinery do the work. Should one of the threads break, the watcher or spinner would deftly lay the two broken ends together and the spinning of the thread went on.

As I looked down row upon row of these spindles, (there were ten thousand of them) I sought the little toilers represented as working beyond their strength. I saw two very small girls, with wan, pinched faces, such as I was led to believe



A CHILD SPINNER

Such as is represented as marching in daily procession into the mills, but I find that the employment of such a child is exceptional, and then she is only employed as a "learner," and not because of any adequate returns to the mill corporation.

existed in the cotton-mills generally, but they did not seem to be hurting themselves with overwork, any more than the others. Occasionally a girl would lift up a part of the machinery, round like a curtain roller, wipe it off and put it back again, or deftly gathering up a bit of waste roving where a thread had broken and had not been attended to in time, drop it into the bag she carried at her side. I did not see any hard work about it.

Beyond the spinning frames were the speeders, the big

spools on which required some strength to handle, but only adults were employed to attend them. As I looked at the frames with their gigantic spools speeding round, men who attended them were standing with their arms folded, while women operators were seated. The women looked healthy and clean, and the men, all young men, had clean hands and faces, and their hair was soaped, parted, and plastered down where they thought it ought to stay.

At the far end of the long room were the carding machines, the only really dangerous machines in the mill proper, and at these men only were employed. On our way to this part of the mill, I ran across the little fellow whom I had first seen with the big broom. He still had the broom, and seemed very happy with it. As he was apparently the youngest boy I had seen, stooping down to him I asked his age. He looked up with a grin as he replied quickly,

"I'se ten years," and then his grin suddenly changed to a serious expression as trying to correct himself he exclaimed,

"I'se twelve, I mean! No! I'se fourteen!" And then in evident confusion he fled down the aisle, taking his broom with him like a small boy with a stick for a hobby-horse. It had suddenly dawned upon him that I had asked his age for no good purpose to him, and fearful that he might lose his job as the consequence, he had shown his willingness to prevaricate in order to hold it. I wondered if his job wasn't just as dear to him as mine was to me.

From the carding-room we descended to the weave room, where the din, to my unaccustomed ears, was terrible. I tried to talk to my guide, but I could neither hear his voice nor my own, above the roar and clatter of the four hundred looms, each one apparently trying to outdo the other in speed and noise as their harnesses went down and up with a crash, and their shuttles back and forth with a bang. But the weavers talked, and they appeared to hear each other without any marked effort.

With my mind on the children whom I expected to see, I

looked through this great room to find them. I felt that my shuffling old guide was growing impatient as I walked up and down the narrow aisles between the clattering, clashing looms, looking for the children. At last my efforts were rewarded. I found a boy. Perched on one of the looms that was not working, he looked very much like a little imp or monkey. He had a horribly pinched and old face, and grinning at me he disclosed a row of teeth discolored with tobacco juice. As I paused to look at him, my guide hurried on, and as I went after him, I asked what the boy was doing there. I found I was getting accustomed to the din, and I could hear the reply,

“Dunno! I reckon he’s helpin’ some o’ his folks.”

As we left the weave room I found myself at the main entrance to the mill again, at which we had entered. The little old watchman, glancing around, said,

“Waal, I reckon yer hev’ seen all thar’s ter be seen ’roun’ hyar,” and leaving me standing in the street he returned to the office.

I stood there reviewing what I had seen. I had seen some boys sitting around and evidently having a good time playing, and girls walking up and down and even sitting on the boxes at the ends of their frames. I had not seen either women or children working beyond their strength. If there was any lint in the atmosphere of that mill, it was imperceptible to me, and as for its being foul and close, as I had read it was, I had not been able to discover it. In conclusion, if that was a fair specimen of a cotton-mill, and child labor therein, then somebody had lied. But those children, even if they were not overworked, were being deprived of a schooling; looking up, I saw a ragged group of boys running along the railroad track. It was a cold, brisk November day. They were bare-footed, bare-legged and thinly clad. Running along to a little yellow tool-house, bright in the sunlight, they backed up against it to enjoy the sun’s warm rays. One, puffing vigorously at the stump of a cigarette, passed it on to the next to take his turn at it. These boys were neither employed



I LEARN THAT CHILDREN REARED AT A COTTON-MILL LOOK DIFFERENT

This photograph of a cotton mill kindergarten class was taken at the Proximity Mills, near Greensboro, N. C., which is practically under the same corporate management as the one at Asheville.

nor going to school. It was said that the employment of the child deprived him of an education, yet here was a vivid example of the education the unemployed child was getting.

Passing on, wondering what kind of proposition I was up against—assigned to uncover the evils of child labor which everybody seemed to know so much about, I saw on the second story of a dingy brick building that looked as if it were built with the same bricks as the cotton-mill, the sign "Sunday School." It was a queer place to have a Sunday School, I thought, and attracted by the seeming incongruity I climbed a narrow stairway leading up to it. In a room at the head of the stairs was a scene that I shall never forget. Upwards of a dozen very odd-looking women were seated in chairs, taking sundry jabs with needles at pieces of cloth held in their crooked fingers. They had crooked noses too, and their faces were yellow and wrinkled, with tobacco stains around the corners of some of their mouths. They sat Indian-like, with immobile faces, paying not the least attention to me, as a frail little lady moved about among them, directing whatever they were doing or trying to do.

On seeing me, the little lady came forward, and introducing herself, said with an air of pride, that she was the social or community worker for the cotton-mill. Then indicating the women gathered there, she said it was her "mothers' meeting," and she was teaching them to sew. Such an old looking lot of mothers I had never seen before, and they were learning to sew.

"Where did they come from" I exclaimed.

"They come from the farms," she said, "and they are the mothers of our mill children, who come here for the most part to work in the mill."

All alive with curiosity, I questioned the community worker further. She told me that many of these people, arriving at the mill, were so densely ignorant that it was necessary to teach them how to live and take care of themselves decently.

Mothers did not know how to make proper clothing for their children; they knew nothing about sanitation, and they not only used enormous quantities of snuff and tobacco, but even gave it to their children.

Seeing that I was interested in her work, she explained how she got these mothers to come to her sewing-class—for she realized that they did not care much about the lessons in sewing—by giving them a collation of coffee and cakes after their lesson was over. And then she usually tried to have someone on hand to give them a lecture or a talk on personal cleanliness, or the injurious effects of tobacco, or on domestic science, hygiene, or some allied subject that might tend to improve them.

She conducted me into a large hall on the same floor, where there were two kindergarten classes in full swing, their teachers guiding the little tots as they danced merrily around in circles, singing childish songs. They were the children of the factory people, and, judging by the assortment of nondescript clothing worn by many of them, it was full time their mothers learned to sew. One little fellow in particular attracted my attention. His hair was cropped close. He wore a man's vest, the ends fairly sweeping the floor as he kicked up his heels, swaying forward now and then as though about to turn a somersault. Their faces were clean, however, but it was explained that sometimes they were so dirty when they first began coming their teachers had to wash them. A story was told how on one occasion upon attempting to wash a very dirty child, it was found sewed up in its clothing. The clothing was ripped off, the child given a good bath, and freshly clothed, was sent home sweet and clean to its mother. The mother upon recognizing the transformed child as her own, became very angry, and going straightway down to the mill raised a big row.

"Why!" she exclaimed, by way of final explanation for her anger, "I had that kid greased and sewed up for the winter."

Once more I stood on the outside of the dingy brick build-

ing looking around with the hum of the cotton-mill on one side, the railroad track in front and "Chicken Hill" rising beyond with its dreary, drab houses. As I stood there the kindergarten teachers came along with their little children, and seeing them safely across the railroad track, left them to scatter up the hill to their respective homes. As I stood looking at the scene, one of the teachers asked me what I thought of the cotton-mill and their community work. I replied that I was very much impressed with it for I had been led to believe that this was one of the worst mills in the South.

"And so it is," said the teacher. "We come from Gastonia, and you should see the mills we have down there. The mill people are provided with pretty white cottages with green shutters, and the people themselves are cleaner and tidier than they are here. Oh, everything is so much nicer down where we came from."

I was told that there was a night school provided for the mill children who could not go to school during the day. I thought I would take that school by surprise as I had taken in the mill, so when night came, I wandered down through the dark lanes of "Chicken Hill" to the dingy brick building again, where I had seen the kindergarten classes and mothers' meeting. There was an automobile outside the door. Climbing the narrow stairs I looked into a class-room where a clean-cut young man was teaching a class of mill boys arithmetic. Seeing me, he at once stepped forward, and extending his hand, said he was the Secretary and Treasurer of the cotton-mill, and it was his night to teach the boys arithmetic. After a few words of greeting he turned me over to the janitor of the building, asking to be excused while he went on with his class, remarking that the janitor would show me around what they called the "Riverside Club."

The Riverside Club proved to be a place for the mill operatives to spend their evenings, hold meetings, have entertainments, debates and lectures for their general improvement and amusement. The janitor showed me the rooms, one a reading

room, another a library, a room for games, a lecture hall and baths. He explained that the baths were becoming very popular with a class of people who came from the country where they were unaccustomed to bathe at all.

After an hour had been given to teaching a class of his mill boys arithmetic, the Secrétary and Treasurer of the company conducted them to the library, where he spent another hour in reading to them. He explained to me briefly, that he had tried reading various books to them, and had found that they



▲ CLASS IN ARITHMETIC AT THE COTTON MILL

enjoyed "Huckleberry Finn," best of all, so as a reward for attending his arithmetic class, he read them "Huckleberry Finn."

When his work for the evening was over, he invited me to take a spin with him in his automobile which was down at the door. As we approached the machine, several boys who had hurried out of the building ahead of us were climbing in and over it.

"Come, boys," said he pleasantly, as we went up to the machine, "you will have to give us the inside to-night."

There was an "All right, sir," from the inside, as two boys

climbed out to the front, which was already occupied by some of the others.

"Isn't there any danger of their falling off?" I asked, as the machine began speeding up the street.

"Oh, no!" replied the mill official, "they are used to this; I always give them a ride up the hill."

"Do all these boys work in your mill?" was my next question.

Leaning over so as to be heard by the boys on the front of the machine, he repeated the question. There came in reply a volley of "yeses" above the hum of the engine, and then one little "no," followed by a piping voice by way of explanation,

"I works in the stone quarry."

Then I asked whether those boys were all over fourteen, for I had heard something about a new school law requiring them to go to school until that age. The question being repeated, a reply came from one of them, who was strenuously balancing himself on his side of the machine to keep from falling off.

"I isn't! I's only twelve! The truant officer is after me, I 'spect," and there was a suppressed giggle.

"I 'spect he's after me too," piped up another voice, "but he hain't cotched me yet," and there were more giggles merging into a general laugh.

"Our new compulsory school law has just gone into effect," explained the mill official, "raising the age at which a child may work to fourteen. A truant officer has been appointed, and he is now rounding up all the children under fourteen and making them go to school. We believe that the boys should go to school, and we did all we could to get the law passed. It is now up to the authorities to see that it is enforced. We do not believe it good policy to interfere with the parents not sending their children to school. It is for the authorities to do that.

As we arrived at the top of the hill, the machine slowed up, the boys tumbled off, and with a scattering volley of "good nights," in which the mill man was addressed by name in a

manner denoting confidence and respect, they dispersed in the darkness.

The mill man sped with me through Asheville's streets and out upon the splendid roads around the mountain-side. We discussed child labor, compulsory education and the welfare work done at the mills to improve the condition of the operatives and their families, the latter being a subject that was entirely new to me for I had heard no account of it anywhere.

"Our mill is a small one," said the Secretary by way of sum-



COTTON-MILL BOYS AMUSING THEMSELVES AT THE MILL CLUB ROOMS

ming up, "and our welfare work is not much to brag of, but we are trying to do the best we can under existing conditions. Our mill village is not isolated from the town, as many of the large mills of the South are; the property is about as it was when we bought it; the operatives' houses are scattered over the side hill, as you have seen, and there is no room for them elsewhere, but we are making efforts all the time to improve the social condition of the families who depend upon us for employment."

And this summing up was another revelation to me. The

mill man did not think the welfare work, which was such a surprise to me, was much to brag of. Other mills were evidently doing more, even from his standpoint, and he was taking no credit to himself or to his company for what he was doing. He was simply doing the best he could under existing circumstances. Other mills were doing more.



WHERE OTHER MILLS ARE DOING MORE

A kindergarten class of children of mill workers at the long-established
Eagle & Phenix Mills, Columbus, Ga.

CHAPTER IV.

POVERTY IN THE MILL VILLAGE.

It is true that I had been somewhat skeptical, on skimming over the numerous articles and books on woman and child labor in the Congressional Library, for many of the statements seemed to me inconsistent with common sense and palpably illogical. Workers were represented, not as human beings, but as animals devoid of reason, and employers as brutal task-masters, a disgrace to our civilization, while the parents of the children who worked were not a bit better. I had too much faith in human nature to believe all this, yet it seemed that where there was so much emphatic condemnation, there must be some foundation for it in fact.

My first day's investigation at a southern cotton-mill, however, although only preliminary to my actual work, brought about a well-founded feeling of skepticism respecting all I had heard and read. Instead of seeing children toiling at looms and at spinning-frames, where the threads tangled on the one and broke on the other all the time, I learned that it would be a physical impossibility to weave with threads on a loom that could tangle. As for threads breaking all the time in spinning, if such were the case, the finished yarn would have so many bumps in it where the ends were pieced, it would hardly be fit for use. As for "baby toilers," I had seen a happy and contented lot of young people, including one boy apparently as young as ten years, employed at light work, which they evidently were glad to have, with ample opportunity for rest. And it seemed to me that it was a great deal better for them than to be loafing along the railroad track seeking the sunshine

against the yellow tool-house to keep warm. But still I felt that there must be a good deal of wrong somewhere, and it was up to me as an unbiased investigator to disclose those wrongs. I was aware of the inutility of seeking much information from the mill officials, for not only were they looked upon as "pirates," but I was cautioned against them by the Bureau officials, by my chief in the field and by my associates. I may add that it was only natural for me to suppose that if the mill men were responsible for the deplorable conditions said to exist, they would avail themselves of all means that lay in their power to deny them or cover them up. Therefore I did not look to the mill men, or to those who had any interest directly or indirectly in the management of the mills for my information. On the contrary I sought those who deplored child labor and mill conditions, believing that they could readily point out the conditions of which they complained, and I could thus get at the truth of the matter.

In Asheville was a learned minister, a doctor of divinity, who had recently published a brochure on child labor in the factories. Believing him to be eminently fitted to point out some of the evils for which I was in search, I called upon him in the seclusion of his study adjoining his handsome church. To my surprise, I learned that he never had been in a cotton-mill and hardly knew what one looked like. An examination of his pamphlet showed that it was made up almost entirely of excerpts from Senator Beveridge's speech. Yet Senator Beveridge did not know any more about a cotton-mill at first hand than he did.

The minister treated me kindly, but as he admitted he could not give me any information at first hand, he referred me to a professional charity worker who had charge of the city's charity work. He thought she would be able to tell me all about the bad conditions in the mill village, and believing she could, I went to her immediately. I found that she was a recent arrival from New York, and the only thing she seemed sure about respecting woman and child labor at the mills was

the "starvation wages." She assured me that there were children employed in the mill who were paid as low as two cents a day, and she thought it was outrageous. I proposed that we go together and investigate. To this she readily assented. By appointment we met the following morning on "Chicken Hill." She immediately conducted me to a small house, in which lived a family, she said, who had applied to her for relief. The front of the house rested on short posts, the rear extending over a ravine, on very high ones.

Our knock was answered by an old woman, very fat, good-natured and dirty. She admitted us to a room without windows, out of the semi-darkness of which glared the grinning face of a younger woman who proved to be the old woman's idiotic daughter. She was seated in front of a fireplace in which a few embers smouldered. Her white face was streaked with dirt and her only garment was a soiled, flimsy calico gown. Two filthy beds and a table took up nearly the whole floor-space of the room, and rags draping the walls gave the place the semblance of a second-hand clothing shop. Looking down, I could see, through wide cracks in the floor, the bright morning sunlight upon the barren brown hillside underneath, over which a stray chicken was darting here and there for flies.

The old woman showed us into an adjoining room, which was evidently not in use, as it was bare of furniture. The house itself was hardly fit for a chicken-coop. Its windows were without glass and were nailed up with shutters made out of barrel-staves. Answering the charity worker's inquiry as to the amount of rent she paid, she said that she had agreed to pay one dollar a month, but no one had called to collect it.

"And I shouldn't think they would," said the charity worker, "want any rent for such a place as this."

In reply to my inquiry the old woman said her family consisted of her daughter, the idiotic woman, and one son, who was working in the stone quarry, earning one dollar a day.

I asked her whether she could not live on the dollar a day earned by her son, whereupon she replied,

"Law, mister, I 'low I could, ef he'd only wourk, but he don't wourk more 'an half the time."

I then called the attention of the charity worker to the fact that this was not a mill family, nor did the house belong to the mill corporation. As the conditions, however, would serve as a valuable comparison with those existing among the poor dependent upon the mill for support, I asked to be shown some of the poorer mill families. She replied that she did not know of many very poor among the mill workers, explaining that the mill management preferred taking care of their own poor. After a pause she recalled two other families who had applied to the charities for relief, and who were dependent upon the mill.

Conducting me to a point near the top of the hill, among the drab cottages belonging to the corporation, which were in good repair, she directed me into one that presented a chaotic state of poverty, neglect and disorder. Two little children with dirty faces, but cheeks fat and red as if chapped, toddled around the floor, one of them munching a piece of yellow soda bread, while the other, making its way to the fireplace, stretched out its little hands cunningly to get some of its warmth. A grown girl, uncouth, slovenly and stupid, professed to be keeping house while the mother of the two children worked as a weaver in the mill. The girl had but recently come from a "rescue home," where she had become the mother of an illegitimate child.

I ascertained that the mother of the two children had recently arrived from a farm, where her husband had deserted her. She had worked at the mill before her marriage, and had become an expert weaver. She had married and gone back to the farm, where her husband had left her. With starvation staring her in the face, she had returned to the mill destitute. The superintendent at once gave her the house to live in, a few necessary articles of furniture, and sufficient



POVERTY ON THE FARM

I learn that within a few miles of Asheville, such families live in dire want. An assistant who took this photograph, gave the two children candy. The following day, upon meeting him again, the little girl barely four years old, asked for tobacco.

rations for two weeks, at the end of which time it was supposed she should be able to support herself by means of the employment given her. But the woman proved to be mildly insane. She would not attend her looms, but walked around the mill talking and acting very queerly.

The next family visited presented a pleasing contrast to the first two. The mother was busy at one corner of the house, and as my guide greeted her, she, with a beaming countenance, gave us a cheerful good-morning, and, drying her hands on her apron, bade us enter her abode. The little shaven-headed fellow whom I had seen at the kindergarten wearing a man's vest was there. Seeing us, he began capering around, making grimaces at us, then suddenly striking an attitude as if to stand on his head, he righted himself, and tried to crow. He then scampered off around the corner, fully satisfied that he had done his part.

With the exception of a stove and a table in the kitchen, and three splint-bottom chairs in the room into which the woman directed us, the two rooms were quite bare of furnishings. There were two rooms above, however, which I did not see. As we passed through the kitchen, I observed on the table several hunks of yellow soda bread, left over from the morning meal. When we had seated ourselves it did not take me long to discover, as I plied the woman with questions, that she was a veritable "Mrs. Wiggs of the Cabbage Patch."

She proved to be a widow with five children, who had recently left the farm for the mill town, because she could not make a living for herself and children, she said. She had arrived at the mill destitute and, doubting that the mill management would supply her needs sufficiently until she could get on her feet, she had applied to the charities for assistance.

"But I reckon we'll git on all right now," she said cheerfully. "Three o' th' kids got jobs in th' mill. Sure they don't earn much, but they don't wourk mor' 'an half th' time. Ef they would only let 'em wourk steady we'd git along fine, but it seems them mill folks sends 'em out every other day or

two t' rest, jes' so they needed rest, doin' nuthin'. Th' wourk 'tain't like wourkin' on th' farm. I got no rest when I war a kid. When I had t' wourk I war jes' druv t' death. It war allus all work an' no rest, or all rest an' no wourk, one or tother," and she laughed blithely as if she had cracked a good joke, although I hardly understood her meaning by "all work and no rest, or all rest and no work," at that time.

"What did you do on the farm?" I asked.

"Everything what war t' be done," she said. "I hoed corn, split rails, made shingles, mended fences, an' ploughed."

"Ploughed?" I exclaimed with a surprised interrogation, for I did not know that women ploughed in this country of ours.

"Ploughed!" she repeated. "Course I ploughed. We w'men on th' farms plough. I kin keep up my furrer ploughin' with any man. My man war a powerful good wourker too, an' I would keep right long with him in th' field any day, ploughin' jes' as good an' straight as he did. Thar warn't many what could wourk like him nuther."

"Didn't you get along well on the farm?" I asked.

"Waal, now, I 'low it seems we oughter had gotten 'long tolerably well. When we went down inter South Caroliny, we raised powerful lot o' cotton, but it 'peared as what th' land-owner didn't git th' store-keeper got, an' then th' ole man drunk powerful sight o' whiskey too. I heard folks tell as he 'would keep a jug at each end o' th' field, so he could take a drink arter each furrer, but I'm not a sayin' that," and her eyes twinkled significantly as if I might draw my own conclusion.

"What did the children do?" I asked.

"Mary, th' oldest gal, uster take ker o' th' littlest un, an' th' middlest uns wourked in th' field with us. An' sometimes Mary'd put th' little un on th' ground an' wourk too. We all had t' wourk on th' farm. Th' kids commence when they are 'bout six years old."

"What can a child of six do?" I asked in wonder.

"Do! Why, you sh'd 'a' seed them kids o' mine! They

could chop th' grass outen the cotton an' keep up with the ploughin' all day long. T' 'courage 'em, like, when I druv t' town on Sat'days, I'd git 'em candy an' chewin'-gum. I reckon as how I did with them kids like they do down at th' mill with us poah folks. T' 'courage us they give us clothes an' things, an' l'arn us how t' sew an' make things, an' l'arn our young uns how t' sing an' play. Law! I never had a kid like thet un before." And here her eyes fell upon the little



ON THE FARM THEY ALL HAVE TO WORK

shaven-headed fellow who was now capering around the kitchen door, intermittently "boo-booing" in at us.

"They air pooty good t' us down at th' mill," the woman continued. "It 'pears they want th' kids t' do diff'rent 'an what they allus has been a-doin' on." And picking up a younger child fairly bundled up in its nondescript assortment of old clothes she caressed it fondly, saying, "This 'ere un was skeered at thet ar' kids garden school they hev' down thar', th' first day she went, but 'pears she likes it all right now. It brightens 'em up a whole lot."

Thinking of the haggard old faces I had seen down at the "Mothers' Meeting," I asked her whether she could sew.

"Waal, I reckon," she said with a laugh. "But 'pears my stitches ain't good 'nuff now. I sewed so as ter hold the children's rags t'gither 'fore I came here, an' nobody made no difference, but they ar' powerful partic'lar down t' th' mill. They want us t' make stitches jes' so. I reckon I kin do mor' good at my wash-tub then I kin at that ar' sewin' meetin' o' thers. My fingers warn't made t' sew with nohow, I reckon."

To the inquiry whether she could read and write, she exclaimed.

"Read an' write! Law! I warn't raised t' no readin' an' writin'. I l'arned'd mor' 'bout a hoe an' an axe then anything else. Maybe thet's why I've had sech a hard time on it. 'Pears folks thet knows readin' an' writin' has it so much easier, but I never got no edjecashun no how, never had no chanst. All wourk er no wourk; thet's jes' th' way 'twas with me; druv t' death mor' an half th' time, an' nuthin' t' do tother half."

This ignorant old woman proved to be a mine of information on things and conditions upon which I was most profoundly ignorant. I call her old because she looked old, but she "reckoned" she was forty-two, and that is not old. When asked the ages of her children she hunted up a discarded "Bill of Fare" of some eating house, upon the back of which were written their names with their respective dates of birth. She had no family Bible in which to keep these records, because, "what good war a Bible to 'em as can't read?" she said.

With reference to her children's schooling, she informed me that they had gone to school some in the country, but it did not do them any good, for they had not learned to read even. I was at a loss to know why the oldest boy, at least, who said he had attended school several terms, had not learned to read, and he offered the explanation.

"You see," said he, "them teachers in the country don't give no 'tention to us poah folks. They jes' let us come t'

school an' set thar'. If thar' be any rich folk's children they give all their 'tention t' them."

On the subject of their food, the mother said, "I've allus managed, poo' folks as we ar' t' git 'nuff bread fer th' kids."

As my thought went to the broken pieces of yellow bread I had seen on the kitchen table, and considering this matter of food an important part of my investigation, I asked what they were in the habit of eating besides bread.

"Bread an' meat is all we poah folks git t' eat in the country, an' sometimes mustard greens, but here we git cabbage."

I ascertained that "meat" was fat salt pork; that the bread was made out of flour, soda and sour milk, or if it was corn bread, it was simply meal mixed up with water and baked. That seemed to be the usual diet, and from the woman's stand-point, nothing more was necessary. The mustard greens when they could be had were added as a sort of luxury.

With reference to the wages paid the children in the mill she said it was a great deal more than they could earn on the farm, and the work required of them in return was much less. As to children earning only a few cents a day, she did not know of any. She showed me her children's pay envelopes, and they were earning fifty cents a day, the same as adult labor on the farms. The only fault she found was that they sent the children out of the mill too often to rest.

Untutored as this woman was she was aware that she was of Irish extraction. She said she had heard her grandmother say that she had crossed the ocean. As I plied her with questions, the charity worker sat with an amazed expression, but I was not sure whether this was due to the questions asked or to the information obtained. As we left the house she did not have a word of comment to make, but seemed to be all at sea. Evidently the information elicited from the old lady had upset at least some of her notions respecting cotton-mill life, conditions, and starvation wages.

CHAPTER V.

ENFORCEMENT OF THE SCHOOL LAW.

DETERMINED to find the evils of factory employment, my next visit was to the Superintendent of Schools. He proved to be a New York man, but he had nothing condemnatory to say respecting either the cotton-mill or child labor. He spoke in a casual way of conditions in the State, pointing to the fact that they could not be judged by conditions existing in New York or elsewhere. For example there was not an orphan asylum in North Carolina supported by the State, and while there were several orphanages supported by religious or charitable organizations, there were no adequate provisions for orphans or destitute children. Neither were there such advanced institutions for the correction and care of juvenile delinquents as special courts, industrial schools and reformatories. When a child transgressed the law, if prosecuted at all he must be treated the same as if he were an adult. He was jailed with criminals, and if convicted and sentenced, there was no alternative but to send him to the chain gang or penitentiary with more or less hardened convicts. But steps were being made all the time to change these conditions.

He was very much pleased with Asheville's new school law by which every child under fourteen was compelled to go to school, and all minors between the ages of fourteen and sixteen must remain in school unless they got a job and went to work. He explained how Asheville was able to pass such a law because the State Constitution, treating compulsory education as a local issue, permitted each county, city, town or borough, to make a compulsory school law of its own as it saw fit, at

the option of a majority of its voters. Asheville, in taking advantage of this State law, had gone a step further to stop child idleness and loafing on the streets, by compelling all children who left school at the age of fourteen to go to work.

The machinery for the enforcement of the new law was just being put into working order. A truant officer had been appointed, and he was vigorously going after all children not attending school. If I desired to see the enforcement of the new law, the Superintendent said he would gladly recommend me to the truant officer to take me on one of his rounds. Further than that, he invited me to attend court and see the first prosecution of a parent under the new law for not sending his children to school.

Accordingly I attended the trial. It was held in the dingy office of a nearby magistrate, who did not seem to know much more about the new law than the defendant himself. The latter was a little old mountaineer drayman, who stood in the middle of the room with a long whip-handle in his hand, and a very much bewildered expression on his face, while the Superintendent of Schools, acting as prosecutor, presented the case. He told of the parent having two boys ages ten and eleven respectively, and these boys were not attending school as the law required. The magistrate at his desk in a corner of the room, directed an inquiring look at the drayman to know what he had to say in his defence. "Why did he not send his boys to school?"

The defendant drayman finally grasping the situation replied with much earnestness,

"They hev no mind to go, Suh," and then, by way of explanation, he added,

"I tell them to go, but they won't go."

"But you are their father, and you should make them go," said the Superintendent.

At this the old man turned to the Superintendent with his former air of bewilderment, and then to the Judge, and back to the Superintendent again, as though he didn't know from

which to expect the next attack. Finally with an air of hopelessness, he asked,

"How can I make 'em? They won't go!"

The old man's attitude was one of such hopelessness, his expression one of such mute appeal coupled with the fact that the idea of exercising his parental authority over two small boys was something foreign to him, the Superintendent himself was forced to smile.

"I suggest, your Honor," said the Superintendent after a pause, "that you suspend sentence, providing the defendant will agree to take those two boys of his to school to-morrow, and turn them over to the teacher. If he will get them to school, we will manage to keep them there. That's all we want."

At this the old teamster brightened up as though a new ray of light dawned upon him. Bringing his whip-handle down with a thump he exclaimed,

"Gad! I'll do that, Suh, I'll git 'em tha' Suh, if I hev t' haul 'em in my waggen. I'll git 'em thar', Suh,—an' you keep 'em thar! We'll fix 'em!"

So the sentence was suspended, and the old wagoner went off chuckling to himself at the thoughts of having fixed up with the Superintendent to get his two boys in school and keep them there.

By appointment I met the truant officer. He was a kindly old chap, who had formerly been the editor, printer and publisher of a county newspaper. He not only discussed social, economic and educational conditions with me freely, but seemed anxious to demonstrate some of the conditions by taking me to see them. As we were going down into the factory village he presented me to a poor looking man who he believed knew conditions in the mill village better than anyone else, and who could explain many of the things I wanted to know about. The man though poorly clad, and ordinary looking, was intelligent, and possessed of a good deal of common sense. He deplored the conditions of the poor very much,

but he maintained that the trouble was not with those who worked, but with those who did not work. He said he approved of children working if they could not or did not go to school, because work kept them out of mischief. In proof of what he said, he told of an idle boy on the outskirts of the town, who spent his time playing around the streets. As a consequence he became so bad and unruly at home that one day in a fit of temper he threw a stick of wood at his mother, the blow killing her. The boy was not even arrested for the crime, he said.

"If that boy had had a good job," said he, "he would not have done that."

The man said, however, that he believed the new school law was all right as it would tend to drive the worst element out of the city, for it was the worst element who would not send their children to school. He mentioned two or three families who had already packed up and gone to South Carolina, where they had no compulsory school law, and there were two or three others who had announced their intention of leaving. The truant officer thereupon said:

"We are glad to get rid of that kind of people, and I hope they will all go. I am going to keep right after them and make them send their children to school, or they will have to get out."

The man added, however, that he thought very poor people should be allowed to let their children work, as there was too much idleness already, and that was what made the country poor. Children should be taught industrious habits while young, and they would then be industrious when they grew up. As it was, among the poor the homes presented no attractions, and the children practically lived in the streets unless driven indoors by cold or inclement weather. They were not subjected to any discipline by their parents, were rarely told what to do and what not to do in their homes, or instructed in anything, if for no other reason than that their parents did not know much of anything themselves. He thought the very best

place for such children was the cotton-mill where they would at least acquire some regular habits and an occupation.

Among the houses visited with the truant officer was the home of the boy whom I had seen in the weave room of the mill, whose little old face had impressed me so. A sister appeared at the door, and informed us that neither her mother nor her brother, the little fellow whom we inquired about, was at home. She said that he was sixteen, that he was a weaver, and that while his name was not carried on the mill pay-roll, his work being credited to his mother, he frequently ran six looms all by himself.

While it was not a part of my business to aid the truant officer in his work, it was a part of my work to ascertain the ages of the children employed in the mill. As I had my doubts about this boy's age, the truant officer and I compared notes, with the result that the officer announced that he would prosecute the parents for not sending the boy to school as he did not believe the boy was fourteen. The mother was accordingly summoned to court, where she produced evidence satisfying the court that the boy was sixteen as stated, and the case was dismissed.

I subsequently called at the house again, finding the mother and children all at home. The mother proved to be a good-natured, careless, thriftless sort of woman, though she had a good reputation as a worker in the mill. She was one of the very few married women whom I found working at all. Referring to her boy for whom she had been prosecuted, she assured me that he was sixteen, and to prove it she lined all the children up in a row, and gave me the age of each, thus proving conclusively that the little fellow with the old face was of the age she said he was. He was still chewing tobacco, and he grinned at me as I stood him up against the door and took his measure. He seemed to think that he was the whole attraction.

"What makes him so small?" I asked.

"Waal, I reckon," said his mother, "he takes after his gran'pap. His gran'pap war' a small man too."

She informed me further that she and her husband both were reared on a farm; that her husband had made whiskey where he came from, and he drank it too, nearly all his life. They became poorer and poorer on the farm, until finally they had come to the cotton-mill, where her husband had found a job, but he would not let whiskey alone, and in a drunken brawl had killed a man. He was tried, convicted of murder, and sent to the chain gang. Then she went into the mill and learned to weave in order to support herself and children. Her



"THEY DID NOT OWN NO FARM"

At the time the photograph was taken, father, mother, grand-mother and nine children, were living in this abode.

husband was subsequently pardoned, came home, and went back to work in the mill, where he was reputed to be one of the best weavers in the mill, drunk or sober,—and he was usually drunk.

To my question which she preferred, the farm or the cotton-mill, she replied that she would like the farm if only she had a farm, but as she "did not own no farm," she thought the cotton-mill the best place "for poah folks."

In the opinion of the truant officer there was no sound reason why families having wage-earners in the cotton-mill

could not support themselves well and decently on their earnings. As to starvation wages, he heard no complaint on that score, but the trouble seemed to be that many of the employed did not spend their earnings wisely. He took me to the home of a boy whom he was after to send to school, saying that there was an example. The boy, a rugged urchin somewhat under fourteen, earned what was considered by his class of people good wages in the mill, not a cent of which, however, was contributed to the family support. He trifled the money away, and neither he nor his parents could explain where or for what it went.

It was shortly after the breakfast hour when we visited his house. On a table covered with a cracked and soiled oil-cloth was the remains of the breakfast, some pieces of yellow soda bread. The usual dirty, greasy, big tin coffee-pot was in evidence. Some of the younger children were still standing around the table, munching the yellow bread.

"Now these people could live better than that, if they wanted to," said the truant officer as we left, "but they do not want to, chiefly because they do not know any better. Even the amount the boy earns and squanders would help them to a better standard of living if they knew of any such. But the trouble is, they don't know; it is what they have been accustomed to all their lives before they came here." Then by way of contrast he took me to another home farther along the street.

"I want you to see this home," said he, "and talk with the old lady. She is intelligent, and maybe she will explain a few things that you do not yet understand."

We entered a little brown house precisely like some of the mill houses, but the interior was fitted up very differently from many of those I had seen. The ubiquitous bed which is the first thing that strikes one's view upon entering the homes in this section of the country, occupied perhaps a third of the floor space of the room we entered, but it had spotless white sheets and pillows, and a clean spread. There was a center-

table with a Bible on it, and pictures hung on the walls. There were many of those little trifling arrangements that go to make a room look comfortable and home-like, even though the decorations were of a primitive fashion.

The old lady in the act of pinning a freshly-starched, white apron on a fat, healthy-looking girl, extended a simple welcome to us. She said she was getting her granddaughter off to school, and with a final smoothing out of the apron with the palms of her hands, she said to the girl,



"THEY ALWAYS LOOKED LIKE THAT"

"There, you're all right now, I reckon! run along," and the girl, picking up her school-books, went skipping cheerfully out of the back door. I was interested in the girl; she was such a picture of robust health, even though a little too fat. I asked the old lady how she managed to keep her looking so robust.

"Oh," she exclaimed, "we have plenty of good milk and butter and bread to eat."

"But there are those cotton-mill children," said I, "they

are not fat and healthy looking. Don't they get enough to eat?"

"They are from the country," she replied, "an' they always looked like that. Them people don't know how to do nothin' nohow."

"They are very poor," said I, "and perhaps they haven't any money to do with."

"They'd have a heap more than I get, if they would only wourk," was the rejoinder. "Why, they make good money in the cotton-mill, but the trouble is, many of them are jes' no account. Most o' the men folks would a heap rather drink blockade whiskey an' loaf about than wourk, an' their women don't try ter fix their houses up or their chi'dren nuther, an' when they get a dollar they don't care whether they get anuther one till that one is gone. That's the trouble with them. The most of them simply don't know nothin' an' are no account nohow."

I questioned her respecting her own income and expenditures, and she gave me them in detail. She owned a cow, which gave her a surplus of milk and butter, which she sold to her neighbors. The money derived from this source, together with what she earned by laundry work, gave her an average income of a little more than four dollars a week, half of which went for rent. On the remainder, something over two dollars, she supported herself, daughter and granddaughter, and her cow. Of course the cow's milk and butter reduced her "ration" bill considerably. Her standard of living could not have been of a very high order, but she had no complaint to make, and it was evident that she lived better than many of her neighbors, though her earning capacity, as she practically stated, was much less.

She criticized the mill families for their lack of thrift, and while she declared many of the men loafed about and drank "blockade" whiskey, I thought her strictures somewhat severe. It seemed to me some of the women were more shiftless and lazier than the men. Only two married women did I

find working in the mill, and many of them did not do enough work in their own homes to keep them clean. These, in almost every instance, were those who had been reared on farms or were the more recent arrivals. They were a careless, good-natured lot, generously inclined, who did not seem to care whether they got ahead or not. This held true, though, only in certain instances, and up to a certain point, and that was where development began with an increase in their wants and a desire for better things. This was particularly noticeable on the part of their children, who, learning what a dollar was worth, and what a dollar would bring, were going after it in the cotton-mill. As their wants increased so did their demand for the dollar, and upon concluding that the mill was not giving them enough, they went elsewhere, where they could get more, as was shown by frequent removals to mills farther South, or to other occupations that paid them more.

That the poorer people coming from the farms progressed at the mills was so plainly evident that, before concluding my investigations at Asheville, I could tell almost at a glance, upon entering one of their homes, whether they were recent arrivals from the farms, or whether they were a longer or less period removed. The recent arrivals would be frequently found crowded into two rooms, and at mealtime the various members of the family might be seen distributed around on the beds and in corners, especially near the fire place, munching pieces of yellow soda bread, with the big tin coffee-pot, covered with dirt and grease, somewhere near at hand.

Young married couples, reared at the mill since they were ten or twelve years old, would almost invariably be found setting up housekeeping for themselves with a dining-room added to their sleeping apartments and kitchen. Even the young unmarried woman trained at the mills as a child worker, and still having her old father and mother dependent upon her for support, would be found in a home bearing marked indications of improvement, such as embroidered pillow-shams on

the beds, framed photographs on the walls, and sometimes even a spare room for visitors.

There was, however, the occasional family from the farm, who had that inherent tendency to want money, and who went after all they could get. They would put in full time, work as hard as they could and save money. Then possibly there was the family who had seen better days on the farm, and their dependence on the cotton-mill was a decided coming down in the social scale, but such cases were rare. I only remember two such, the father of one having given up his farm for a Government job at Washington, and the other consisting of an old lady and her granddaughter. The old lady said she had been educated at a rural academy, but now she was dependent on her granddaughter for support. In referring to her reduced circumstances, she said:

"It is with me like an old fence when one of the palings gives way; unless you put it back, they all soon go, and you have no fence."

However, her little home was comfortable, and her granddaughter, a frail, lady-like young woman with spectacles, was earning good wages in the cloth-room of the mill, putting up samples. When I asked the old lady whether she had any reason for complaint with the mill management for unfair or ill treatment, a question that we were required to answer on the schedule, she replied quickly,

"I should say not! Mary sprained her ankle a while ago. She stepped on a misplaced board out here after dark. The Superintendent sent a doctor right up here at once, and they not only paid the doctor, but they paid Mary all the time she was laid up, just the same as though she worked."

CHAPTER VI.

WORKING WITH SCHEDULES.

FOR the purpose of securing data in a uniform manner, the agents at the mills were provided with three sets of schedule blanks. One was for the establishment or factory; one was for the family having some member employed in the factory, and one was for the individual woman or child employed. These schedule blanks seemed to me to be poorly adapted for the work in which I was engaged. The establishment schedule seemed to meet the requirements of a factory inspection more than any definite results respecting the effect of factory employment upon the employed. For example the number of fire escapes, exits and entrances to the mill, might show inadequate provision for the escape of the employed in case of fire, but they could have no bearing upon the effect of the employment on the employed. And the same was true with the family schedules. They merely provided for showing the earnings of the individual members, with their supplementary incomes from a cow or a vegetable garden, if they had any, with some of the conditions under which they were living, but no provision was made to show whether their standard of living was inferior to what they had been accustomed to, whether any inadequacy was due to insufficient wages, or whether the fact of their dependency on the mill for support tended towards progress or retrogression.

This schedule work among the families was at first very obnoxious to me. I was required to go into homes, and to ask questions that might be interpreted as very impertinent and uncalled-for. Each time I approached a new family or

individual member of one with my inquiries, I expected to be told to get out and mind my own business. But I soon found the class of people I had to interview tractable when properly approached, and upon gaining their confidence, I learned that their seeming ignorance and stupidity was more often assumed than real. Eventually the obnoxiousness of this work wore off, and as I learned to know the people and rather like them, it became very interesting, and whereas at first I deemed the schedule work futile, I became convinced of its great value if only properly done. I did not confine my inquiries, however, to those on the printed blanks, but formulated others which I deemed necessary to the subject in hand, the answers to which I recorded in my notes.

While I was cautioned by my chiefs to exercise great care in getting correct answers to the inquiries on my establishment schedules, I found much greater care was needed in securing data from the heads of families and the individuals employed, than from the mill-owners or managers. The latter for the most part welcomed the investigation, if for no other reason than that it would dispose of what they considered slanderous allegations made against them by professional reformers and allied special interests. It was reported by all our agents that as a rule, the manufacturers threw open their mills to our investigation, even though they did not expect a square deal, as some of them candidly expressed themselves, and they usually took great pains to show us around and answer our questions.

With the families, however, while some few carelessly or purposely gave wrong or misleading information, they would often supply worthless data without any deliberate intention to deceive. For example the mother recently arrived from the farm who remained at home sitting listlessly in her almost empty, barren house, with a chew of tobacco or a snuff stick in her mouth, did not possess the information necessary to answer the inquiries correctly. More particularly was this the case when the questions related to the earnings of the

various members of the family or the number of days that each of them worked. Many women of this class did not know the number of days in a year. How then could they be expected to know the number of working-days, much less the number of days that each member of the family had worked? These listless, shiftless women, when asked the number of days their husbands had worked, would usually reply that he worked all the time. If her statement was accepted as true, there was but one thing to do, namely, to multiply his daily wage by the number of days the mill was in operation, and thus get his yearly earnings. I subsequently saw schedules taken by agents in the field, where the earnings of operatives were computed by this method, whereas it is a pretty well-established fact at many of the mills that the operatives generally—particularly women and children and the more recent arrivals from the farms—do not average steady work two-thirds of the time.

I have in mind a schedule, the data on which must have been secured in this manner, and which was sent to me to be used with data for my final report. It showed a family that had moved from the farm to a mill at Anniston, Alabama, living in squalor and evident poverty, the mother and one of her sons being found in bed with their clothes on, forming a veritable picture of sloth and misery. The old mother complained to the agent of her circumstances, and told him how much better her condition was on the farm. Yet the data recorded by the agent showed that the income of the family at the mill was about twelve hundred dollars for the year, an amount on which many of our government clerks are able to support their families well in the city of Washington, where rents are high and the standard of living beyond comparison with that of a southern mill village. Of course the data on the schedule respecting the earnings and the income of the family were worthless for the reason that the various members of the family had not worked the number of days they said they had.

I found, upon asking such mothers as the one described on

the schedule referred to, how long Matilda Ann, the eldest child, for example, had worked, the reply would come in that dragging monotone peculiar to these people,

"She wourks every day."

And then to my inquiry how many days has she worked during the year, I would get the reply, perhaps,

"She hain't lost nary a day this y'ar, I reckon," and then after a pause, or a more explicit inquiry on my part,

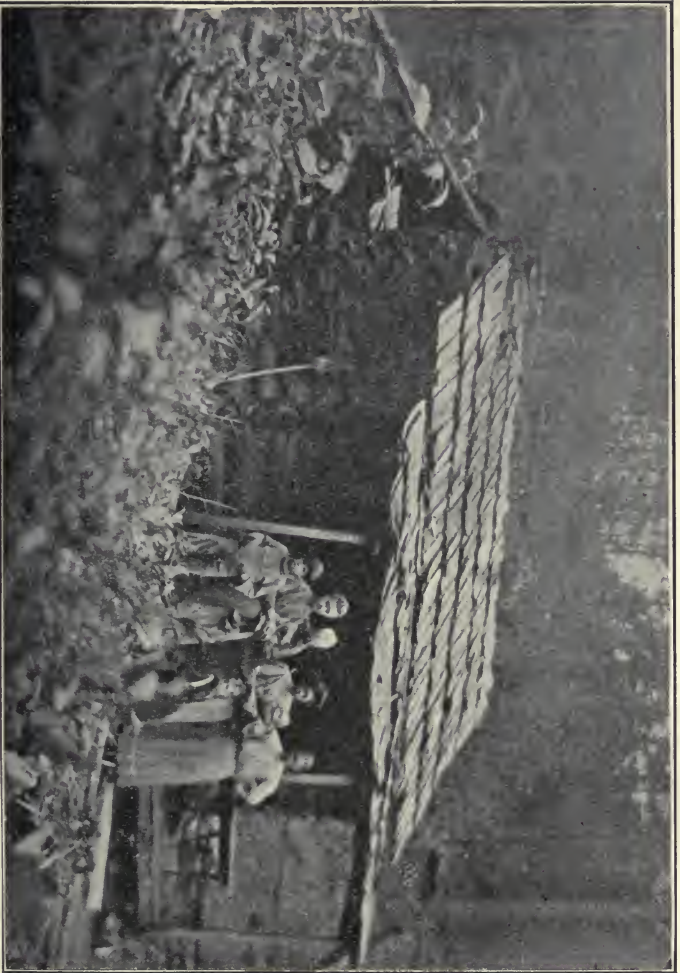
"She wourks every day when she hain't staid hout fer sickness."

Upon asking her, "Is she working to-day?"

"Waal, No! I reckon she hain't wourkin' ter day. Pears ter me I heard her say some'in 'bout bein' sick ter day," and probably a call at the next house or a few houses beyond would discover Matilda Ann swapping snuff and gossip with her neighbor, or some other girl who had "jes' staid hout o' th' mill because she did not feel like wourkin'."

The head of a family whom I found usually giving misleading or incorrect information purposely, with no intention of telling the truth, was the old father who usually hung around home, never doing any work at all. The first such example I met with was that of an intelligent appearing man occupying a two-room tenement in the lower part of a house built against the side of "Chicken Hill," the upper part of which, forming a separate tenement, was occupied by the cheerful widow whom I have referred to as a "Mrs. Wiggs of the Cabbage-Patch."

The man received me with a sort of boisterous urbanity, and appeared to be rather glad that I had called on him. He answered my inquiries without hesitation, knew precisely what each member of his family earned, the number of days they had worked, their occupations, and so on. He entered into a discussion of his household economics, told me what his family had to eat, and added to the customary "rations" of corn-meal or flour and pork, an allowance of fresh meat, potatoes and beans.



AS SOME OF THEM LIVE ON THE FARM

Many such families, unable to support themselves, went to the cotton-mills from the Northern part of Haywood County. The children and grandchildren in the above group are all illegitimate. Not one of them ever went to church or school, nor could any of them read or write, yet the children of the old woman were unusually intelligent.

As I jotted down his statements, congratulating myself that I had finally found the head of a mill family who could supply me with the required data with such ease, it suddenly occurred to me that his statements did not agree at all with the conditions surrounding him. His wife, with two teeth projecting from otherwise toothless gums, tobacco-stains caked around the corners of her mouth, and very dirty bare feet showing beneath a filthy and ragged skirt, sat looking at me from her seat on the porch with languid curiosity. Another woman, younger, unusually fat but just as filthy, was poking a stick with snuff on its end into her mouth. As I looked up at her inquiringly, the man said she was his eldest daughter, and added by way of explanation,

"She's jes done got religion. The Holiness people got hol' on her, an' she's jined 'em."

In the open door of one of the two rooms was another daughter, considerably younger than the other; her bare feet were streaked with dirt, and her form in a drapery of rags was outlined against the gloom of the room, cold, dismal and cave-like behind her. Neither of these girls was working, though the cotton-mill was running, and they could have worked continually if they wanted to.

As I looked at these members of the family, and then at the man who appeared so unusually intelligent, I could scarcely refrain from feeling sympathy for him, tied as he was to such a slothful, dirty woman and two uncouth daughters. He said that he was from near the little village of Clyde, Haywood County.¹ He had first gone to South Carolina where he had

¹ "From one little village, called Clyde, near Waynesville, during the past year fifteen hundred of our splendidly developed mountain people have gone to the cotton-mills of South Carolina. They have been tempted from the farm by the prospect of getting wages for every member of the family, from eight to ten years up." "It is a conservative estimate to say that there are fifteen thousand children under fourteen years of age working in the cotton-mills of North Carolina twelve hours a day or night, and the greater part of these are girls, the future mothers of our race. It is a shame for a nation to make its young girls weary." The Rev. Dr. A. J. McKelway, Assistant Secretary of the National Child-Labor Committee, in a paper on the Physical Evils of Child Labor, published in the Eleventh Biennial Report of the State Board of Health of North Carolina, 1905-1906.

tried working at several of the mills there, and had recently found his way up to Asheville, where he intended to go to work as soon as he found a job that suited him.

To my inquiries respecting his conditions on the farm, he said he never owned any farm. He had never gone to school to amount to anything, but he claimed he could read "print a little." To my inquiry whether any of his children ever went to school, he replied that they had not; that the schools did not amount to anything in the country where he came from, and now that they were at the factory village, the girls were too old to go; but he was going to send his boy just as soon as he could get straightened out. Here he nodded toward a bright-looking boy of eleven or twelve years, who, of course, would be obliged to go to school if he remained in the village, as "soon as the truant officer got after him."

Suspicious as to the correctness of the data this individual gave me respecting his household economics, and the number of days he himself had worked according to his statements, particularly as neither of the girls was working, I went up the hill around to the upper part of the house occupied by my cheerful widow, the "Mrs. Wiggs of the Cabbage-Patch," and questioned her respecting him.

"Lawdy!" she exclaimed. "That ole devil down thar never wourked a day in his life. Ef he war my man, I'd jes' take 'im out an' lick 'im. I'd make 'im wourk, I would!"

"Could you lick him?" I asked.

"Of course I could lick 'im! He 'ould be too lazy to fight he 'ould! Why, he makes thet wife o' his do every thing, even ter beggin' clothes to wear for herself an' chil'ren. Ef he'd only wourk, he'd support thet family o' hisin well."

"He seems to have good wholesome food," said I. "I asked him if he had beans and fresh meat to eat, and he said he had, and he told me just what he expended for food."

The last U. S. Census returns prior to this statement of the Rev. Dr. McKelway, in which it was represented that fifteen hundred of our "splendidly developed mountain people" had gone to the cotton-mills from Clyde, to be ruined, gave the population of that place as two hundred and forty-four.

“Did he! Why, the lyin’ divil! His family never sees a bit o’ fresh meat or beans either, no more than the rest on us. He’s too lazy ter go ter wourk an’ earn anything. He gits nothin’ but bread, bacon an’ coffee, an’ his family doesn’t get much of thet nuther. I’d like ter lick ’im jes’ fer tellin’ yer thet lie. His da’ghter went ter the Holiness home jis’ ’cause she could git some close an’ some’n ter eat, an’ I know his wife begs.”

A careful analysis of my experience with this man demonstrated how, by asking leading questions, almost any statement could be obtained from such as he. In discussing his household economics I had asked him among other things if he had fresh beef and beans. If I had not asked these leading questions in the manner I did, naming these articles of food, it never would have occurred to him to tell me that he had them.

Shortly after a final interview with him, his eldest daughter, the fat one, was taken down with pneumonia and died. The family was already indebted to the mill corporation, nevertheless, the corporation not only assumed the expense of burying the dead girl, but found it necessary to appeal to the city authorities in order to have the body removed by the undertaker engaged for the purpose, the father appearing mentally deranged and prohibiting its removal.

CHAPTER VII.

THE COTTON-MILL VERSUS THE FARM.

A HAGGARD, disheveled, prematurely old woman, sitting disconsolately in front of a handful of coals in an open grate, scarcely deigning to look at me as I stood in her open door, drawled out ;

“ Come in an’ set down, thar’s a cheer,” and designating the chair she turned again to the grate, expectorating into it a quantity of tobacco-juice.

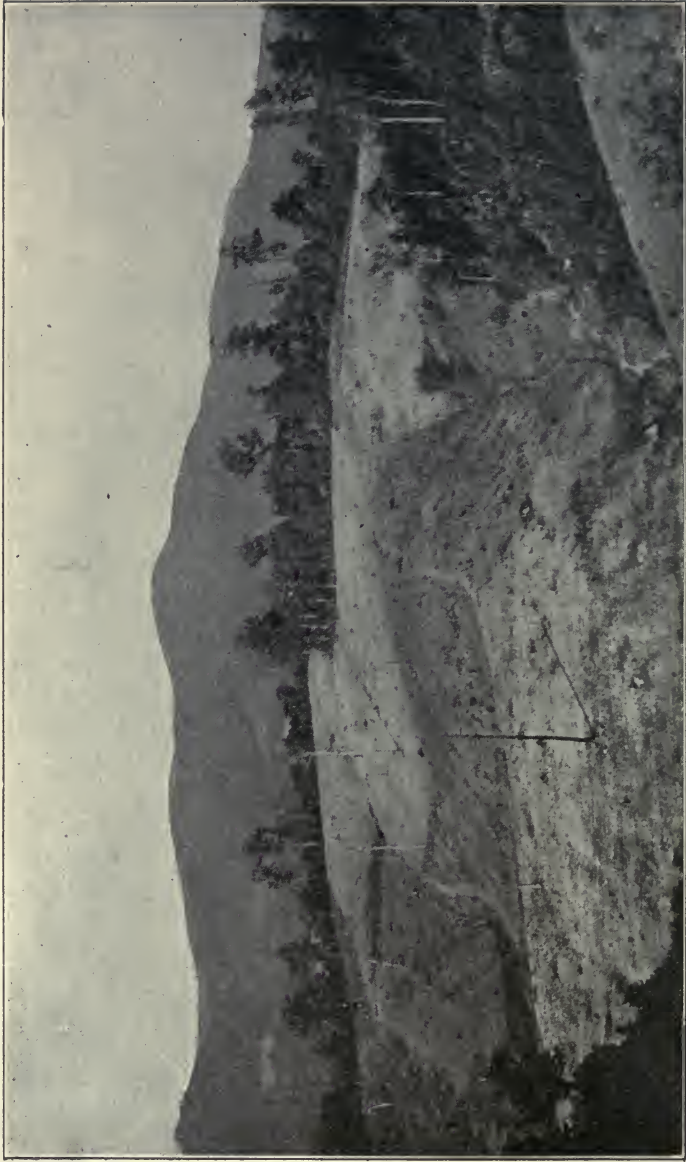
Two or three dirty children were sprawling on the floor, or clinging to the mother’s skirt by turns, she paying little heed to them. Nor did she display the least curiosity at my presence, but kept her place in front of the grate, with her chin in her hands, or shifted them to her lap as she raised her head to expectorate. The woman evidently believed I had some authority for asking the questions on my schedule, and she answered them in a dull, drawling monotone, until I came to the seventeenth inquiry.

“ How long have you been married? ”

“ Waal, now! ” she exclaimed, directing a well-aimed spray of tobacco-juice between two live coals, and then turning round and looking me squarely in the face, “ I’d like ter know th’ meanin’ of these hyar foolish questions.”

I was unable to explain what her marriage had to do with child labor in a cotton-mill, but I told her I had been sent out by the Government to seek information, and she should not blame me for any of the questions I was required to ask, but do her best to give me the answers.

She comprehended evidently, and with a knowing nod sug-



" IF THE LAND HAD NOT WASHED AWAY "

Typical field of a mountain farm after the timber has been cut off and two or three successive crops have been harvested. The Commissioner of Labor contended with the author that if the farmer owning such land as this had remained at home, he could have made more money than at the cotton-mill.

gested further that I was taking the census, or, as she expressed it, "One of 'em fellers what goes 'round t' find out how many of us poah folks is a livin', and hain't died since last time, eh? Waal I 'spose hit's all right, but as thet ar' Gov'ment don't give us nuthin', it 'pears ter me hit wants ter know a powerful lot fer nuthin'."

I made a few conciliatory remarks, and then reverted to my previous question respecting the length of time she had been married.

"I dunno how long I been a-married," said she. "I niver keep no 'count o' such things, but I reckon hit's nigh onto twenty years."

The next inquiries were those relating to the ages of herself, her husband and the children. On these points she was as non-committal or inexact as on the previous one. She "reckoned" that she "was nigh on ter forty-five," that her husband was somewhat older; and she was quite sure that her eldest boy was "nigh on ter eighteen," while Maud and Annie, the next two, were fifteen and fourteen respectively. With respect to their earnings and the number of days they had worked during the past year, she insisted that they had worked all the time, never lost a day. Then came exceptions and contradictions, until I saw clearly that the data as given were worthless unless they could be corroborated elsewhere.

With respect to literacy and schooling, she said she had never been to school a day in her life, and consequently could not read. She had come from the farm to the cotton-mill, she "reckoned," about four years before. Her home was up in Haywood County to the north of "the little village of Clyde." When I asked her which she preferred, the farm or the cotton-mill, she drawled:

"Waal, I 'spose I 'ould prefer th' farm if we war fixed fer hit, but we hain't fixed fer hit, an' we git 'long better at th' mill. My ole man hain't loss a day's wourk since we've been hyar, I reckon, an' the gyrls wourk most o' th' time."

While I was talking to her the two girls, Annie and Maud,

came in. They were bright comely girls, their faces were clean and beamed with intelligence. I at once noted the great contrast between them and the disheveled old woman. While they were plainly dressed, their clothing was neat and tidy, and their hair well arranged. They nodded to me pleasantly, and while Annie, the younger one, stood by the fireplace observing me curiously, Maud went into the adjoining room, took down an ironing-board and proceeded to iron some



WHERE THEY CAME FROM

pieces. As she did so she answered my questions through the open door with alertness and intelligence, as did her younger sister also from her place by the chimney-piece. They corroborated their mother's statement that they were fifteen and fourteen respectively. Annie never had gone to school before coming to the mill, and Maud had gone for a short time only. Neither of them could read or write when they left the farm, but since coming to the mill they had learned to read and write very well. They had begun working

in the mill at the ages of ten and eleven respectively, and during their four years at the mill had evidently learned a good deal more than reading and writing.

As I looked at these two bright, intelligent girls, I contrasted their appearance with that of their poor old mother. With the scene before me and the knowledge of their changed condition at the mill, the words of that learned doctor, "It is a shame for a nation to make its young girls weary," in pleading for legislation to prevent just such families as these from lifting themselves out of sloth, ignorance and vice by the honest employment of their children at light work, seemed to me not only a despicable misrepresentation of facts, but an outrage upon humanity.

Still at a loss to account for the intellectual improvement of the two girls, in view of the declaration of the mother that they worked all the time, I asked them how they had found time to study when they had to work in the mill.

"Wourk!" exclaimed the old mother, "they don't hev ter wourk t' 'mount t' nuthin'. They don' know what wourk is sence they left the farm, besides, them mill folks is powerful good ter 'em."

And then the girls explained how they had attended the mill classes and had learned to read and write. As I showed some surprise at the things they told me so different from what I had read, they expatiated upon them, telling me how they had been taught to sew, to mend their clothes, and to make fancy work. Recently they had bought a new high-priced sewing-machine, agreeing to pay for it by installments out of their own individual earnings. As they told me of the things they had learned, which they never would have learned if they had remained in their mountain home, even the old mother awoke from her lethargy in front of the fire.

"They hev' got more goin's on 'round hyar then I ever seed or hear'd on 'fore we come ter this hyar place," she said.

As I insisted upon knowing how the girls got the time for all

these "goin's on," Maud replied from her place at the ironing-board,

"We don't have to work so much, nohow, and the mill superintendent is glad to have us go up to their schools. He lets us out of the mill whenever we want to go."

As they confessed that their brother, eighteen years old, could not read, I asked the mother how this happened.

"Waal, you see," said she, "he war a big boy when we left the farm, an' somehow we poah folks don't take ter no l'arnin' nohow. When we come hyar t' th' mill he war t' big t' take any interest in l'arnin' ter read, an' thet's how it is he can't read like the gals. They war little, an' they jes' tuk t' it like."

Turning to the two girls, I asked them whether, after all, they did not prefer the farm to the cotton-mill. Their reply was simply a laugh. It was a laugh that was more impressive than a volume of talk. From their view-point I was certainly ignorant. The farm from my view-point presented a picture of a little home, mid green fields and trees. "The log cabin in the lane," of the "Old Kentucky Home," was a place of great contentment and blessedness. But here was this untidy, prematurely old woman with tobacco-stained lips and tobacco between her jaws, presenting a picture such as I never had seen before, and I wondered what kind of "farm" it could be to produce such as she. Then to be laughed at by her two bright, vivacious daughters for the suggestion even, that after all they might prefer the life on that farm to their life at the cotton-mill! It did not require any argument to convince me that they certainly knew more about the subject than I did.

The total weekly income of this family amounted to fifteen dollars, half of which was expended for fuel, rent and rations, thus leaving them seven dollars and fifty cents for clothing and incidentals. The mother insisted that she did not save anything, and while I doubted the accuracy of her statement respecting the family income, my examination of the mill pay-rolls showed in this case that she was very nearly correct with

respect to her husband's earnings in that he had hardly lost a day's work during the entire year. He proved to be a little weazen man who never had seen a cotton-mill until he had come down from the mountains four years previously. Like the old watchman who had first shown me through the mill, his smallness of stature could be in no way attributed to his working as a child in the cotton-mill. There was nothing wrong with him except that he was born in ignorance and poverty, and had never had a variety of good, nourishing food until he got where he could earn it at the cotton-mill.

He told me that he had attended school, but it was so long ago, all he could remember about it was the "ole blue-back spellin' book" that some of the children had.¹ With respect to the grade he was in when he left school, he said he did not believe his school had any grade. He was sure they did not "hev nuthin' but thet old spellin'-book, an' ef anyone of 'em scholars in his day ever got a grade he didn' know on it. Ef one of 'em ever got through thet spellin'-book, they jes' went through it over agin."

One of the questions I put to every family I visited was one requiring their preference for the farm or the factory. While some of the old people expressed a preference for the farm, it was not so with the younger ones. I could not find a single one who wished to return to the farm. Even the old people qualified their preference with an "if." It was usually "ef the land hadn't washed away," or "ef I was fixed fer it," or something of the kind. But with the younger people it was emphatic. No farm for them!

At a loss to understand this preference for factory life, I exhausted every means in my power to get some satisfactory explanation. The only reason I seemed able to obtain from the workers in the mill themselves was that the work on the farm was too hard. To me that was far from satisfactory, for the

¹ One of our Congressman from the mountains of North Carolina told me that he could remember a relative of his cutting out letters from an old newspaper and pasting them on the wooden paddle such as is used for washing clothes, to provide a text-book for the children attending school.

reason, perhaps, that some of the most delightful days of my life were spent on a farm raking hay and loading it in my summer vacations. Why, then, was it that these young people at the mill seemed to look back upon the days they had spent upon the farm with anything but pleasant recollections? Why did they refer to it, in some cases, even with bitterness?

Occasionally, when I became insistent, young girls would tell me that on the farm they had to plough, hoe corn and pull



HOW THEY ARE IMPROVED AT THE MILLS

fodder. The second family that I chanced upon, whose dependence on the cotton-mill was a decided coming down in the social scale, was at the little mill village of Craggy, just beyond Asheville. This village being completely isolated from the city, presented much better conditions than the community scattered over "Chicken Hill." The mother of the family was neat and lady-like, and her home was in order and had every appearance of being well kept. She told me how her husband had been a former landowner in Yancey County, and he had

sold his farm to take a Government position in Washington, D. C., where the children had attended public school. Taken ill on the Capitol steps, her husband was obliged to resign his place and return to his native mountain home. But no longer owning a farm, he found he could not make farming pay on rented land, and therefore he had brought his family to the cotton-mill, where his two lady-like daughters were obliged to work in the mill.

I naturally inferred that the two gentle, delicate daughters would prefer almost anything to working in a cotton-mill, but when I asked them their preference, the mill or the farm, they shook their heads dolefully, expressing their preference for the mill. The mother, however, expressing her preference for the farm, was suddenly checked by one of the daughters, who exclaimed,

"Why, mamma! You know very well that when I hoed corn on the farm half a day, I was sick for two days," and then, turning to me, she added,

"I had rather work in a cotton-mill from sunrise to sunset than go back to the farm again."

On one of my rounds in the early part of my investigations, I encountered a young man having that grace and urbanity so general with our southern people as we know them. He was soliciting orders for photographs, photographic enlargements and picture-frames. As he had followed this occupation in many mill villages in both North and South Carolina, he was well informed on many things of which I was totally ignorant, so I was soon plying him with questions. In the conversation that followed he referred to the mill people as almost a distinct race, rather than class, remarking rather frankly:

"You people of the North do not know anything about the poor people of the South. A few of you have stumbled into our cotton-mill villages, and have seen some of the conditions among the poor in them, think they are bad, but it is nothing to what you may see in the country. Of all the low-down,

ignorant, God-forsaken people you ever saw, the worst are in the rural districts outside the mill villages. I have seen mothers without husbands tramping along our country roads, and along railroad tracks, with their children, willing to beg or steal. They would do anything for a quarter."

"Are these the people that come from the farms?" I asked.

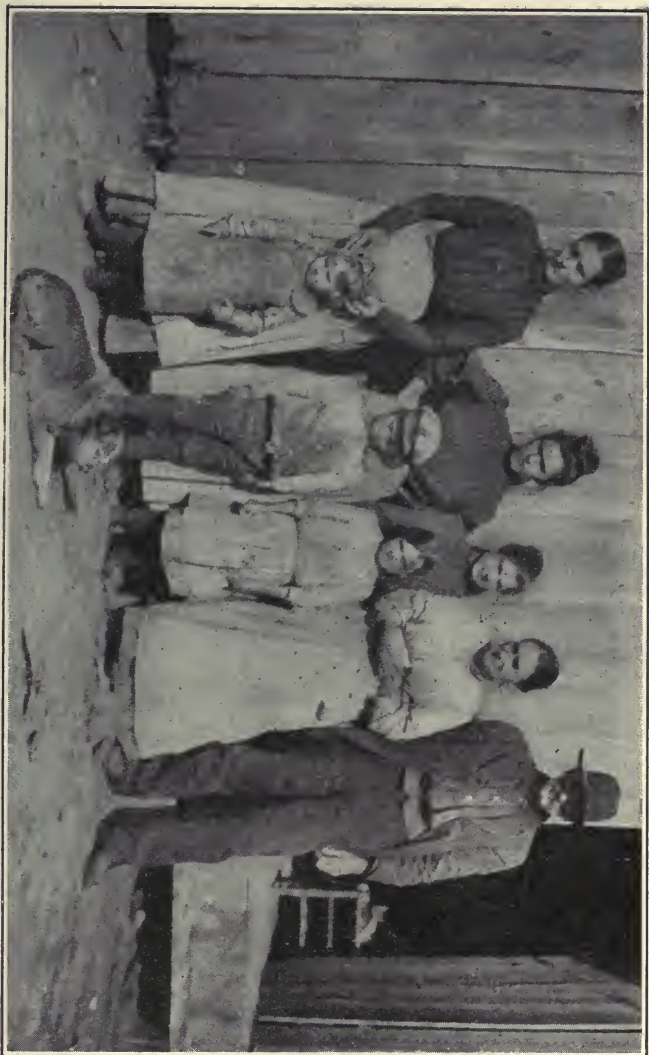
"Farms!" he exclaimed. "They know nothing about a farm. They never had one, but they have lived in the country no one knows how long. They must have been planted there, getting worse and worse as time went on."

"But how do they live?" I asked.

"The Lord only knows, for I do not know much about them in the country, or in the woods where they come from, nor do any of the rest of our Southern people. But I have seen them along the railroad tracks, and in our mill villages, where I have observed conditions among them that you or any other civilized person would scarcely credit. I recall going into a house in one of our villages in South Carolina, occupied by one of these families. The occupants were all women and children." And then he gave a description of a scene of squalor and filth that is unprintable. One of the women had just become a mother. The stench in the room was unbearable, but as he felt that he could not very well retreat from the scene without making some explanation, he exhibited his photographs, asking one of the women whether she would not like to have some, whereupon she replied whiningly,

"We ar' dreadful poah folks hyar; we ain't got no money neow, but we'd like ter have some of 'em picturs. Sue's jes' got 'er baby, an' we ain't got no money, but maybe we kin pay fer some of 'em ginst the time yer git 'round agin."

"You can sell these people anything," said he by way of explanation, and it does not make much difference whether they have the money to pay or not. If you catch them with the money, they will pay. There have been times when I have actually been ashamed to take their money, they were so



A TENANT FAMILY ON THE YADKIN RIVER, LOWER NORTH CAROLINA, IN THE COTTON BELT
The family raises the cotton, and the land owner usually gets half of it as his share. The store-keeper, who supplies the family with their "rations" while the crop is being raised, gets the other half.

poverty-stricken. Many of these people won't work if they can help it. They prefer tramping about. Sometimes they will pick up coal alongside the railroad tracks and sell it. Nobody wants them around, and they go from place to place, picking up what they can, and sleeping wherever they can find a place to sleep. Their children are born wherever they happen to be, even in school-houses and churches.¹

Months after this conversation, I met the young man in a southern mill village, where he had set up a studio of his own. Referring to our first meeting and the conditions of the poor people in the country as he described them, I said,

"I find that there are not so many such people as you described going about the country now. What has become of them?"

Laughingly he replied,

"Well, I'll tell you. The cotton-mills got some of them, the jails got some, and the lunatic asylums got the rest."

¹ This description is more applicable to a class of poor whites living in the pine woods, in the sand-hills, along certain rivers, in the swamps, and along the Atlantic coast, than to the poorest of the mountaineers, who by comparison are a "splendidly developed people."

CHAPTER VIII.

THE QUESTION OF WAGES.

JUDGING the wages paid the mill operatives from the standpoint of wage earners in other communities where a much higher wage scale is paid, they might be called, with some degree of truth "starvation." But it did not seem to me that they should be judged from any other standpoint than that of the wage earners themselves.

In labor as in everything else, unless artificial means be taken to rule otherwise, the supply and demand is the dominating factor in regulating the pay. Up to the time of the beginning of our investigation, instead of there being a greater supply of labor than demand for it, as is the usual case in long-established industrial centers, the very reverse marked the condition with respect to the labor problem in the South. Instead of there being more operatives than jobs, there were more jobs than operatives. Where such a condition prevails labor unions do not flourish, and strikes, unless brought about by outside influences, are unknown.

Whenever or wherever a new cotton-mill went up in the South, the immediate country around was drawn on for labor. As this supply proved insufficient, the outlying country was drawn upon, and finally sections of the country lying many miles beyond the mills were fairly scoured to obtain the labor necessary to operate the machines in them. In scouring the country for this labor, inducements greater than those already open to it had to be offered the families in order to get them to leave their homes for the mills, which they naturally looked upon with a great deal of suspicion. Upon their arrival at the

mills it was necessary to train them to do the work required of them, and this proved to be one of the chief reasons for the employment of their children.

While it is true that the inducement held out to the families removing to the mills was chiefly the employment of their children, the employment offered them was not only child's work, but it could not be done with any degree of efficiency by the untrained adult labor, such as was available. The training of that adult labor as a rule was a matter of physical and mental impossibility. The plough-woman from the farm, who had never done much else than plough, split rails, plant and harvest crops, while her liege, lord and master, drank whiskey, ploughed some and roamed the forest with his old squirrel rifle, could not learn to spin. Neither could her lord and master. To teach either of them the work required of them in a cotton-mill would be like trying to teach a longshoreman type-writing.

At the Asheville Mills I estimated that there was steady work for about two-thirds of the children carried on the pay-rolls. In other words there were more children than jobs for them. This allowed the mill management to conveniently dispose of about one-third of its child-labor force by allowing the employed children to stay out of the mill on an average of two days a week. My examination of the pay-rolls showed that they did. In the weave room however, where adult labor was employed exclusively, there was not enough labor to run all the looms. This was not because of insufficient pay, but because there were not enough weavers to be had. Very few of the men or women coming from farms could learn to weave, no matter how much they were paid. As a matter of fact the average earnings of the weavers were fully three times what they could earn on the farms whence they came, working many more hours and at much more laborious work.

With respect to the wages paid the children, the least of them, except possibly "learners" on the spinning frames, were paid as much as adult laborers on the farms, and their

average earnings were a good deal more. The least paid the doffer boys was fifty cents a day, which was even more than farm laborers got in many instances. As to the labor required of the doffer boy in the mill, it was not only light work, but it took only a fraction of his time during the working hours of the day, whereas on the farm a day's work meant laborious work in the field, often beginning before daylight and ending after dark.

In the case of spinners in the mills, their pay differed from that of the "doffers" in that they were paid according to the sides they attended. Their pay per side, however, was the same whether they were ten years old or forty. Their age made no difference, but a skilled spinner attended more sides than an unskilled one and consequently earned more money. A "learner" upon taking up spinning would be given one side to commence with, whether a child or an adult, but as adults rarely learned to spin, they seldom attempted it. A child learning to spin at the age of twelve would almost invariably outstrip the girl beginning at the age of sixteen. The average fourteen-year-old girl having learned spinning would attend four sides receiving at least fifty cents a day. At sixteen becoming more skilled, she would attend six sides receiving at the same rate seventy-five cents, and if she remained on the job, becoming a skilled adult spinner, she could easily attend eight frames earning one dollar a day. But as a rule she preferred taking some other job that paid her more. If adults from the farm, where they never received over fifty cents for their day's labor toiling in the hot sun, or in inclement weather from twelve to sixteen hours, could do this work, it is reasonable to suppose that they would do it.

I remember one exceptional case where the father of a family became a weaver. He belonged to the better class of families, however, having owned his own farm over the mountains in Cocke County, Tennessee. In his home life very different conditions were displayed from those hitherto described as characteristic of other arrivals from the farms.

His wife was a busy little woman who engaged herself with her household affairs and children. Their oldest son, a young man of nineteen or twenty, had served an apprenticeship as doffer boy, and had worked up through the various occupations in the mill until he became a weaver. The father also had a job in the mill, and about the time his son started in to weave he decided he would also take it up. It was not long before the young man had mastered the occupation. The father learned also, but he could not begin to keep up with his boy. Week after week he tried to handle as many looms and weave as much cloth as his son, but he could not. I saw the superintendent hand him his pay envelope with the remark,

“You haven’t caught up to the boy yet, have you?”

“No, but I ’spect ter catch ’im nappin’ yet. It does seem as tho he jes’ keeps ahead of me all the time.”

A daughter in this same family, fourteen years old, a bright girl, tall for her age, earned during the week for which I scheduled her, seven dollars and a half. In reply to my question whether she did not prefer going to school to working in the mill, she replied that she liked school pretty well but preferred the mill because of the money she earned. She had two elder sisters who were quite young when they left the farm and began working in the mill. They had recently married young men of their class, who having begun as doffer boys were holding good jobs that supported them well. The girls as soon as they married quit the mill, which I found was the rule in such cases. I visited them in their modest little homes, and I not only found their homes clean and well kept, but the young women themselves, presented as good, as robust and intelligent type of young womanhood as may be found in communities possessing much better advantages.

As I had heard so much about the idle father who would not work, I had expected to find him in conspicuous evidence with his wife and children working in the mill while he loafed around, but so marked was the reverse of this among the



"UNCLE BILLY"

A type of the idle father at the cotton-mill, yet "Uncle Billy" was employed as watchman at the Elk Mountain mills.

poorer class of people from the farms, that shortly after beginning my investigations, I wrote to my chief that I thought those popular lines of the song should be changed to read,

“Everybody works but mother and she sits around all day.”

As a rule I found nearly all the old fathers trying to do something. While there were not jobs in the mill for all of them, a few had landed such jobs as that of watchman, yardmen, bale openers and sweepers, which did not require any particular skill on their part. A favored occupation with those who did not have jobs in the mill, seemed to be hauling coal, wood or furniture, with an old horse and dray. As they were not wage-earners they could not be scheduled as such, nor could they give a concise or reliable account in dollars and cents of their earnings as was required by our schedules. They probably made just enough in each case to feed their horse, take care of their dray, and add a little something towards the maintenance of their families.

A problem that seemed to me worthy of consideration, and to which no attention appears to have been given by any of our writers and investigators upon the subject of child labor, was that of the young men between the ages of seventeen and twenty-odd, who would not work or even try to work. I always felt sympathy for the old, played-out, atrophied father, whose opportunities when young had evidently been limited to the narrow circle of his environment. But for the young loafers around the mill village I had no sympathy whatever. In referring to this matter I heard the suggestion made that the chain-gang would be a suitable punishment for them. It occurred to me, however, that if they could be drafted into the army, that would be the best thing for them. They were not really bad men, and it is a well-known fact that the Southern mountaineers have made good soldiers. Some of the best soldiers that we have in our army to-day, I have been informed, are recruited from the mountains of North Carolina. I have also found a greater interest displayed by these young moun-

tain men respecting the service, than I have found elsewhere, but I believe fully half of those who would enlist if given the opportunity, would be barred from the service because of their inability to read and write.

A typical example of one of these mountaineers untrained to work, was a strapping, good-natured sort of fellow whom I interviewed in his home. On being asked why he did not work, he replied that he did sometimes. Asked what he did, he said he earned a quarter chopping wood sometimes, and the preacher occasionally gave him something for sweeping out the church. As he had two or three sisters working in the mill, and they were supporting the family, I asked him why he did not get a job in the mill too.

"Waal," said he, in that casual drawl of the shiftless mountaineer, "I thought about it sometimes, but they say it's unhealthy wourk. They say the lint fills up yer lungs an' yer might git consumption."¹

In referring to this fellow in a conversation with some of the mill girls who were his neighbors, their attitude towards him was one of laughter and ridicule. None of the girls would go with him or be seen in his company, they said, which fact alone, it seemed to me, would tend to eliminate in time, such young loafers from the community, for, finding themselves ostracized by the rising generation of workers, they would either go to work or leave the community.

This example of a young man who had not been brought up to work, presents a striking lesson when contrasted with that presented by another man, upon whose home I stumbled one morning by the merest chance. His wife, a buxom, healthy-looking woman, was busily engaged washing her children's faces, fully half a dozen of them being scattered around. While the room had the ever-present bed in it, it did not have

¹ This is one of the many striking examples I met with showing one of the results of the educational campaign against child labor. It reaches even the most ignorant loafer of the Southern mill village, who avails himself of the "injurious, lint-laden, moist atmosphere" story as an excuse for not working, while he lives on the earnings of his younger brothers and sisters.

the barren, desolate look, that I was so accustomed to in the average mill home, and while it presented evidence of good housekeeping, and mother's skill, yet she made apologetic remarks because she had not yet "straightened things up." I was so surprised at the superior appearance of the home and intelligence displayed therein, that I directed my inquiries to ascertaining to whom it belonged. As a result I was informed that the woman's husband was a boss weaver earning four dollars a day down at the mill, and that he never lost a day's work in the entire year. To interview him in his home it was necessary for me to call on a Sunday.

Accordingly I called one Sunday morning, finding the man whom I wanted to interview a long, lank personage, whose growth certainly had not been stunted by his work in the mill, although he had worked ever since he was a small boy. He said he had never attended school a day in his life, and about all the education he had ever received was what he had obtained in the cotton-mill. At the age of seventeen, seeing the necessity of knowing how to read and write, he had employed a school-teacher to teach him, and now he was not only holding a lucrative position, but he was contributing to the support of his aged parents who still lived on the farm of his birth.

Upon the subject of child labor, I found him rather bitterly opposed to any legislation which he thought would enforce idleness upon a growing child. He considered the best place for boys as soon as they were big enough to do a little something useful, was the cotton-mill, unless they had an aptitude for book learning, and then it was all right to send them to school. As for his own boys, he did not purpose to let them grow up in idle play with the more or less questionable element of the mill community, but whenever there was no school work for them, he took them into the mill with him. Even though there was nothing for them to do but run errands and hand tools to the workmen, he considered it better for them than playing on the streets. The training and knowledge they thus received would be helpful, and would better fit them for

regular employment when the time came for them to earn wages of their own.

He called my attention to the town loafers, such as the one described, who came from the farms after they were grown, having already acquired idle ways, and he believed the children of the mill families would turn out pretty much the same, unless they were taught to work and acquire industrious habits. There were always jobs open to the young men in the mill village, if they would only take them.



TYPES OF VILLAGE LOAFERS

Published by the National Child Labor Committee as types of Adult Operatives, but about the only thing they ever operate is boot-leg whiskey. It is not work that affects them, but keeping as far away from it as they can get.

As illustrative of the disposition of these chronic loafers, he related how only recently he had tried the experiment of getting in close touch with some of them in order to induce them to take a job under him. He invited them to some kind of "treat up town," and on his way home with them he had said,

"Now boys, why don't you come down to the mill and let me learn you to weave. I'll see that you get paid while learning, and when you get learned, you can make good money."

"Waal," drawled one of them in reply, "I'll tell yer jes' how it is. We jes' can't make up our minds ter go down thar in thet ole mill o' yourn an' wourk all day long."

"Now," said the boss weaver in conclusion, "if those fellers had gone into the mill when they were younger, even though there was nothing much for them to do, it would be no hardship to them to work regularly now."

As illustrative of a typical condition at the mill respecting not only household economics, but child labor as well, may be taken a family which impressed me very much as one trying to do the very best it could under existing circumstances, and yet the conditions would no doubt be taken by zealous reformers as presenting some of the most deplorable aspects of child labor. The mother in this family, a strong-jawed, bony mountain woman, seemed to think her mission in life was work. She came toward me from her back yard as I entered her front door, the sun glinting brightly on the top of her pink sunbonnet and the wash-paddle in her hand. Entering the house with long strides, she bade me take a chair, while she chided one of the children for not getting up, and the dog for lying down. She was inclined to be a little querulous, and I soon saw that she had taken me for the truant officer, and she was prepared to hold her own with me as far as the matter rested upon the mere presentation of her case.

"Thar's thet kid thar," said she, pointing to a little girl with an abnormally large head, and a pair of dull, blue eyes which she allowed to wander languidly around the room and then at me by turns, "she's only twelve y'ars ole, an' et don't do no good ter send her t' school; she don't l'arn nuthin' outer books nohow; we tried it; we sent her ter school, an' she jes' set thar all day long a starin' 'roun' doin' nuthin'. The teacher could git nuthin' inter her head, nor outer her nuther, but down ter th' mill she tuk right hole thet ar' spinnin'; she l'arned quicker then enny th' other kids, an' now she tends more sides reg'ly, an' makes more then enny my other ones, an' my oldest gal is eighteen too, an' she began l'arnin' long

'fore this un. I tell yer et don't do no good ter send a kid like this un t' school what won't l'arn from books nohow."

After assuring the woman that I was not the truant officer, and had nothing to do with sending her twelve-year-old spinner to school, I obtained a very intelligent account of her household economics. The family consisted of herself, husband, seven children and three boarders—twelve persons in all. The house contained only two rooms and a kitchen. Its furniture was mostly beds. There were a few chairs and a cook-stove, and while bare of adornment, the beds appeared to be clean and well made.

The family had been at the mill two years, having arrived from a farm in destitute circumstances. They had been induced to come by a labor agent, who promised the father and elder children jobs in the mill. Upon their arrival the superintendent had advanced them necessary rations, house-rent and fuel. They were now independent, the woman said, and did not have to get trusted for anything. She said her husband did not work regularly, because he was sick, but he did odd jobs at carpentering.

Her husband having been indicated to me as one of the idle men who would not support their families, I made a subsequent visit to the house when he was at home. I found him a quiet, inoffensive man, who looked as if his wife were the master of the situation, and if any one could make him work she could if she wished to. He was quite pale and anæmic.

To the inquiry whether he could read and write, he said he had never been to school, but he had learned to read by the light of a pine knot in his mountain home. At a very early age he was bound out to a farmer, who made him work very hard until he was twenty-one, when he rented a piece of land on the share system and took up farming on his own account. In the beginning he got good land and prospered. He raised corn, wheat, tobacco and sorghum syrup, giving half of all he made to the landlord, who furnished all necessary tools and stock for work as well as the log cabin in which he lived.

For seventeen years he did well, tobacco being his money crop. Then the bottom dropped out of tobacco, and with the land growing poorer and poorer, he was barely able to make a living. An attack of pneumonia finally crowned his misfortune; it left him a physical wreck. He was then induced to move to the cotton-mill. During his first year at the mill he worked pretty regularly, but his lungs were so badly affected from pneumonia that he was obliged to quit.



“AS THE LOG CABIN IN WHICH HE LIVED ”

His wife said she preferred the farm to the mill, but “it tuk wourk,” she said. “Them what’s raised at the cotton-mills don’t know nuthin’ ’bout wourk. Whar I war’ raised nobody ever he’rd about a kid not wourkin’ when he got th’ chanct. I had ter plough when I war’ a kid, an’ I ploughed and hoed corn all my life till I come hyar.”

The schedule covering the earnings of this family presented some very interesting data. While the father had earned only fifty dollars during the year, the eldest daughter, age eighteen, had earned eighty-eight dollars. A son, age sixteen, earned ninety-six dollars; another daughter, age fourteen, earned

forty-four dollars; and the youngest daughter, age twelve, the one with the abnormally big head and stupid, blue eyes, who could not learn anything from books, had earned one hundred and eighteen dollars, approximately a third more than the oldest girl, who began learning to spin at the age of sixteen.¹

The total income of this family of nine persons for the year, was three hundred and ninety-six dollars. These figures might be used to show that the family was forced to live in an abject state of poverty due to the meager wages paid, but their wages were one thing, and their earnings another. The father, for example, at a wage of only one dollar a day, could have earned easily three hundred dollars, whereas he only earned fifty. And so with the other members of the family, their income could have been materially increased if they had worked more.

The income of the family had been increased prior to my visit by three boarders, who paid a total of five dollars and fifty cents for their board, thus increasing their approximate income to thirteen dollars a week. Of this thirteen dollars, the mother informed me that nine dollars was spent for maintaining the entire family, including the boarders. The amount stated paid the rent, fuel and "ration" bill. From her standpoint she was doing well. Her chief worry appeared to be that the best wage-earner in the family, the abnormal child with the big head, who would "do no good in school," would be forced by the compulsory school law to go where she would be of no use to herself or anyone else.

To make sure that the boarders and wage-earners brought the mother the amounts she stated, a final question on this point brought forth the reply with quick assertiveness.

"Yer jes' bet they do. I do the wourk ter feed 'em, an' they hev ter do the wourk ter git the money. Ef they don't

¹ I did not attach much importance at the time to this example of an apparently stupid child unable to learn at school proving such an apt pupil at the machinery of the cotton-mill. The figures show that she proved by far a more efficient and persistent worker than her sister, who was six years her senior. As I subsequently found many such examples of apparently stupid or feeble-minded children becoming skilled operatives in the mills, and one case where an idiotic boy became a skilled weaver, I think this phase of child study very important.

git the money, I don't feed 'em. I jes' cut 'em down ter short rations when they don't bring enough money home, an' they know et."

One of her boarders was a man with one leg. He had lost his leg from fever on a farm. He came to the mill a cripple and destitute. The cotton-mill saved him from becoming an object of charity by giving him a job picking over waste at seventy-five cents a day. As he paid approximately two dollars a week for his board, here was presented an example of an individual's earning capacity in comparison with the cost of his maintenance. It will therefore be readily seen that he was able to earn more than double what it cost him to live. In answer to the usual argument that if this man had been paid more, he would have lived better, I may add that although his work was not hard, he worked barely enough to pay his board and keep himself in tobacco.

CHAPTER IX.

IN SEARCH OF BAD MILL-CONDITIONS.

My Asheville investigations about terminated, I was informed by my field chief that the investigation at other mills not having developed the bad conditions anticipated, he desired me to proceed to an out-of-the way place where there was a small mill, and where no doubt, I would find young children employed, and the bad conditions we were looking for. The town I was directed to was Taylorsville, the terminus of a branch railroad to the north of Charlotte, in Alexander County. I was glad of the opportunity thus presented to make a study of conditions elsewhere, particularly as my work at Asheville had given me a strong conviction that, far from being detrimental to the employed, the cotton-mill was their benefactor.

At the ticket office in Charlotte I made the acquaintance of the train conductor, a lively, good-natured fellow, who volunteered to tell me something about that part of the country I intended visiting. He declared that it was about the finest country God ever made. All they needed up there, he said, were good cooks, for they had the produce, but they did not know how to cook. I boarded the train with him, and was very much amused at his manner of addressing the passengers, and calling out some of the stations. At Statesville he called out, for example,

"The best town in North Carolina," and he dubbed Hiddenite, "the darkest place in the State."

The journey grew long and tiresome, and at length I fell asleep. It was nearly midnight when with a final bump, I awakened. The "Captain," as conductors are universally

called in the South, stood over me with his lantern on his arm and in a most friendly way said,

"Come on, we are there!"

I followed him out into the darkness and he relieved me of one of my grips. As we walked along all I could see beyond the glow of his lantern was a star-like light in the distance, which eventually displayed the glass panels in a front door, behind which was an ordinary lamp on a table in the hall-way of what proved to be the hotel. He opened the door without the use of a key, and guided me to a room the door of which he unceremoniously opened. Swinging the lantern around to make sure that neither of the two beds which his light disclosed, was occupied, he lighted a lamp on the shelf over the fireplace, remarking that I might take my choice of the beds. He then said, "Good night," and left me. As I turned to fasten the door, I found that the lock was without a key; neither was there a bolt of any description, which satisfied me that it was so because none was needed.

I went to bed and slept soundly. Before daybreak I was awakened by a young negro coming into the room and making a fire. The fire crackled and blazed cheerily in the fireplace, and as I heard others moving about, I jumped out of bed and dressed just in time for the breakfast-bell.

The traveler's impression of a country is oftener guided by his stomach than by his head. Feed him well and house him well, and he is most apt to give a good account of the country in which he meets this treatment. I certainly was fed well during my stay at Taylorsville, though I must confess that I am not altogether partial to chicken every day in the week, and at every meal. It was served at the little hotel for breakfast, dinner and supper, and in no measured portions either, but great platters of it, both fried and stewed. And there were hot waffles for breakfast, and hot corn bread and hot biscuit three times a day. Dinner was the only meal at which vegetables were served, and the variety was usually limited to cabbage and sweet potatoes.

I was particularly impressed with the healthful, robust appearance of the people in general, especially that of the children. There was none of that anæmia that I had seen at Asheville, which is usually referred to as the cotton-mill type. I remember asking a small boy where he got his rosy cheeks and a lady hearing me said to him:

"Why don't you tell the man you got them in Taylorsville: that's where we raise rosy-cheeked children."

Upon my remarking to the hotel mistress that I had no key to my door, and that the hotel was not locked when I came in with the "Captain," she replied in that soft voice so typical of the southern lady:

"I have been here fifteen years and I have not seen a key to a door in the house in all that time, and I don't believe there is any."

I was treated most kindly by everyone whom I met, and it seemed that they all tried to do something for me. On one occasion asking casually the population of the place, and no one seeming to know, one of the men went out and took a census of the town for me.

On another occasion, having engaged a horse and buggy for a dollar and a half a day, and returning before the day was over, the owner handed me back twenty-five cents of the money, because I had not used the team all day.

I was called a Yankee, and sometimes a "damned Yankee," but it was in a rollicking, good-natured way. A veteran of the civil war explained that he was a rebel through the force of circumstances, and another man told me that as soon as the people of North Carolina got a little better educated they would not vote the way someone told them to, but would use their own judgment and vote to suit themselves. "You see," said he, "the Republican majority is increasing every year," and then referring to the railroad legislation that swept through the South about that time, he declared it had put the State back twenty years.

A drive of about two miles took me to the cotton-mill I was sent to investigate. On my drive out to the mill, I was impressed with the fact that I saw no fenced fields, nor did I see anything resembling a farm, or a farm-house, such as I was familiar with in rural districts elsewhere. I saw no cattle, although there were acres of what appeared to be good pasturage going to waste. Occasionally I passed a little patch of dry cotton-stalks with their bursted bolls, and a few shreds of white lint still clinging to them. Such houses as I saw consisted of little wood-colored structures, mostly of upright boards of two or three rooms. One was a two-story cabin of logs, belonging to a widow, who was in prosperous circumstances, I was told.

The entire landscape was of a dull brown or wood color, houses, trees, woods, cotton-patches, and fields all the same, without a bit of brightness anywhere to enliven the scene, until suddenly a fine, handsome white house came into view. It fairly glistened in the sunlight, with its fresh coat of white paint and many gables trimmed with brown. It was the "Sheriff's" house, and the Sheriff owned the cotton-mill, and almost everything else around there, my driver said. The "Sheriff" was not Sheriff any longer, but to all intents and purposes he was a veritable Czar in that part of the country.

The road led down past his home to the cotton-mill, a long, low structure of brick, one story high on the edge of a small stream. To the left of it was a large frame building occupied as a store and post-office, back of which was a little street of white cottages. There were other cottages on the hillside sloping above the river, and these were the homes of the mill families.

There was an old half-obliterated sign at the mill-entrance, "No Admittance," and when I made inquiry in the store, a young man in charge informed me that the only one who could give me any information about the mill was the "Sheriff" and he had "gone to a preachin'," and would not be back until the afternoon. If I wished to go into the mill,



GIRL TOILERS AS THEY APPEARED AT THE LILEDOWN MILLS

They objected to having their photographs taken because they were not dressed up, but they were at length prevailed upon to leave their work and have the picture taken. Compare them with those who do not work.

however, I could go right in, he said, the sign didn't mean anything.

As I entered the place I encountered a foul-smelling machine called a slasher, which to some minds might be enough to condemn the mill at once. There were no women or children working at the slasher, however, and I passed on to the looms, and then to the spinning-frames. The mill was old and stuffy, and appeared to be crowded with machinery. Indeed, it seemed to me a much worse place in which to work than the mill at Asheville, but no one appeared to be overworking themselves. While the girls attended to the spinning on their frames, the boys, between doffs, went outside the mill and loafed. They could have played if they cared to, but I did not see them playing. The absence of a desire to play on the part of children in some parts of the country is most marked, to one accustomed to see children play whenever they have the opportunity.

After finishing a casual inspection of the mill, I began my visits to the homes of the people. The first one I entered was presided over by a talkative, friendly sort of woman, who explained, as she designated a pot steaming away in the fire-place, that she was cooking shell beans which her husband and children were very fond of. She unhesitatingly gave me the data required for my schedule as far as she was able to. Her husband and children had worked at other mills, where they received more money, she said; but somehow they did not lay aside as much as they did "at this little ole mill right here."

The next house I visited was presided over by a widow with I don't know how many children, one of whom was "wrong in her head." The widow was a raw-boned woman, who looked as if she had had a hard time of it all her life. She had always lived on a farm, she said, until her husband died of pneumonia, whereupon, finding the work altogether too hard for herself and the children, she had moved to the mill. While her elder children worked in the mill, she took in washing, and was able to save money.

When questioned respecting the ages of her children, she brought out a Bible, which purported to contain a record of them. She opened the book and, after making a vain effort to read it, passed it to me. Scrawled upon the pages in quaint phraseology were records that formed an interesting and amusing study in themselves. After some figuring I found it recorded that Cordelia, the eldest daughter, was "bourned" when her father was only eleven years old. Our instructions were to accept in all cases, in ascertaining ages, the records in the family Bibles, whenever such were to be had.

The widow's sole complaint against the cotton-mill management was that they would not give her boy, slightly under twelve, a job. She said he was thus forced to idle his time away when there was no school, and as the work in the mill was easy she did not see why he should not be permitted to produce something.

As I approached the next cottage I saw through the open door a muscular, dark woman, who was evidently preparing dinner. She switched a big pan of biscuits around in the oven, in which there were sweet potatoes also. The sight of the unusual quantity of food probably inspired the thought, for I told her that I was a government agent, and I wanted to know what was her cost of living.

She fairly snapped out in reply, "It don't cost us nothing! We did not come here to spend our money ter live, but ter make something."

She was not angry, however. It was merely her way of expressing herself. She said her husband owned a good farm some miles away, where they raised cotton, corn, sorghum syrup, wheat and sweet potatoes, besides their own meat. They had two strapping girls, who ploughed and helped raise the crops on the farm and as there was nothing for them to do after harvest, they had moved to the mill, bringing their provisions with them. She figured that the earnings of her two daughters and her husband in the mill were net gain, discount-

ing the small amount they paid for rent, "although," said she, "the girls want more fixing up down here than on the farm, and that costs us a little something extra."

As there was no hotel or boarding-house nearer than Taylorsville, I went without my dinner, continuing my visits to other homes until I was informed that the "Sheriff" had returned, and was in the mill. As I went in search of him, a man wearing a black felt hat, seated on a box talking to another man, upon seeing me, immediately came forward, smiling pleasantly. He was rather handsome, slim, loose-jointed, with dark hair and a very black moustache, a type that predominated to such an extent in that locality that I believe I should recognize it anywhere as belonging to that part of the country. As he extended his hand, giving me a friendly greeting, I took it for granted that he was the "Sheriff," although in general appearance he did not differ from his workmen. As I explained my business, he not only expressed his willingness to assist me in every way possible, but urged me to point out anything I considered wrong in his mill, or any condition that might be improved upon.

There was no place in the village for me to put up over night and he invited me to his house, an invitation I gladly accepted, particularly as it would give me a better opportunity to observe the condition and habits of the people. He showed me into the front room of his house, which I judged to be the "best room," as a New Englander would call it, and bringing in a shovel of live coals, he soon had a cracking blaze in the fireplace.

In lieu of plastered walls, the room was ceiled with dressed lumber and almost as white and smooth as an enameled bath tub. There was the usual bed in one corner of the room, and it was fresh with white linen, embroidered shams and spread. The Sheriff's wife presided at the table in the dinnig-room but she did not seat herself. She was a robust young woman, with dark hair, gray eyes, fair skin and rosy cheeks. As she served the table standing, she invariably addressed her hus-

band as "Sheriff," with an air of great respect. The supper consisted of a big platter of boiled fresh pork, hot biscuit of extraordinary size, cold canned tomatoes just as they came from the can, and a cake of butter very hard and white.

After supper the "Sheriff" took me back to the room which I was to occupy for the night, and there seated by the fireplace, I plied him with questions as he freely answered them. He expressed his views on child labor, and told me the story of his cotton-mill. From his view-point, based on his knowledge of human progress, child-idleness resulted in great harm to the future citizen and the country at large. Indolence was the very reason that there was so much poverty and lack of thrift throughout the country, he said, and indolence was caused by the child not being trained to regular habits of work, but being allowed to loaf until loafing became a habit. Train a child the way he should go, and he believed he would go right, which was the maxim of my own New England boyhood days as I remember them.

In the village, he said, there were boys from eight to ten years old who had nothing to do, and they frequently got into mischief which they would not get into if they were employed in light work such as the cotton-mill furnished, and at the same time they would be earning something. He had several boys of his own, and he preferred having them work at something, even if they did not get any money, rather than have them idle their time away.

In this connection he referred to the eleven-year-old boy of the widow whom I had visited, as an example of child-idleness caused by legislation prohibiting him employing a child under twelve. He thought the boy would be much better off if he had a job in the mill.

"Why don't you give him a job anyway?" I asked.

He replied that he could not do that, as he would be violating his oath as a citizen. The answer surprised and puzzled me. I could not see what connection his oath of citizenship

had to do with the employment of children and the child-labor law, and as I asked him, he replied,

“As a citizen I have sworn to sustain the laws and constitution of the State, and I could not violate a single law without violating my oath.”

He told me how his father had owned a little wool-carding mill on the river above the present site of the mill before the civil war, but everything he possessed was swept away during the conflict, after which he had had to begin all over again. His father had impressed upon him as a boy the necessity of work and industry, and he had always worked. He had gained the respect and esteem of his fellow citizens to the extent of having represented them in the State Legislature, and had finally been elected to the highest office in their power to give him, that of county Sheriff.

Upon his retirement from office the year previous, he had bought the old cotton-mill which was pretty well run down, for a comparatively small sum, and, organizing a company with himself Secretary and Treasurer, he had taken up its management, although he had no practical mill knowledge or experience. He had found it a paying investment, however, and was running the mill to its full capacity night and day.

My investigations showed that the operatives worked more hours and received less pay at this mill than in any mill perhaps, in North Carolina. The mill was running day and night, sixty-eight hours constituting a week's work for the day force, and sixty-four hours and a half for the night force. The doffer boys were allowed outside the mill between doffs, but only three boys and six girls under sixteen were employed at night. One boy was pointed out to me who had been taken from doffing and put to spinning as a punishment, but when offered his old job again he refused it, saying he liked spinning better, which went to show that spinning could not be any harder work than doffing, as might be supposed, although it required more constant attention.

While the pay-rolls showed that the amounts paid the oper-

atives were small indeed, the results of my visits to the homes disclosed not only a general feeling of contentment, but neatness and thrift very different from the conditions of the poorer families described at Asheville. Everyone interviewed seemed to be glad of the opportunity the mill presented of enabling them to earn ready cash. I found only one family showing the low social state equal to some of those described in my Asheville investigations, and one horrible old woman living in the woods by herself, the mother of many illegitimate children, one of whom was married and leading an improved life as a weaver in the cotton-mill.

The "Sheriff" himself, directed me to the family referred to "as not being of much account," and he also told me about the old woman in the woods. The family was living in a rude old "farm" house pleasantly situated in a sheltering grove a short distance from the village itself. Its various members were strong and rugged looking, particularly the girls. They came from an adjoining county, where many of the people were described as "hard livers" and were known as idle, and thriftless, with no desire to work.

I found the cost of living very much less than it was at Asheville. The price of butter was only twelve cents a pound; eggs were five cents a dozen, and other articles of food were proportionately low. Nearly all the heads of families were farmers producing their own wheat for flour, corn for meal, and hogs for meat. Beef was rarely consumed, and I was surprised at the almost total lack of vegetables, which lack I found to be common throughout the country. Sweet potatoes and cabbage appeared to be the only vegetables in common use. The Sheriff told me that he did not know of any white potatoes in the county. At the little hotel in Taylorsville, for such fare as I have described, I was told of one regular boarder who paid only ten dollars a month.

Rents for the mill cottages ranged from three to five dollars a month, according to the number of rooms. They were all furnished with primitive simplicity, there being little or no

pretense at adornment of the home. The floors were always bare of carpets, but generally clean. I was particularly attracted by the pronounced type presented by many of the young women, such as is known as "Irish beauty." Some of them indeed could be called truly handsome. Dark hair, fair skins and rosy cheeks predominated. Undoubtedly the Irish blood was there, particularly in the casting of their physique, while their comparative thrift and industry was due no doubt to Scotch and English ancestry. The Sheriff bore a Scotch name but he claimed English origin. That there was a good deal of Irish among them was borne out by many unquestionably Irish names, as well as features. I remember one short, stocky, freckle-faced boy employed as a doffer, whom I encountered outside the mill between doffs. He was as Irish as the boys from Paddytown or Scrubhollow, such as I was familiar with in my school-days, and he bore the classic name of Finn Cannon.

The people as a whole were sober, church-going and God-fearing. They had their own little church at the mill. Their school facilities, while quite inferior to those of the larger cities and towns in the State, were above those of the average rural district. The school building was owned by the mill company, which in fact was the "Sheriff," and in order that a teacher above the average could be had, and the school term extended longer than the four months provided for by the State, rent, repairs on the building and necessary fuel, were supplied by the "Sheriff" or company, free of charge, thus allowing the expenditure of all the school money for the teacher's salary. In addition to this the "Sheriff" maintained a summer school for which no provision was made by the State.

Taylorsville, being the county-seat, had the usual court-house and jail, and while I was there, one prisoner was brought in from the country. He was a fine looking, handsome young man who had been arrested on the highway while driving with a keg of illicit whiskey in his wagon. The Sheriff arrived

with a revolver that looked almost as big as a cannon, brought him into town and put him into the jail, a curious old brick building with an iron cage in one of the rooms on the upper floor. To get into the room it was necessary to go through a low doorway much below the average height of a man. The Sheriff was a slim, dark-moustached man, with a face of grim determination, of the predominating type already referred to. He did not raise the slightest objection to my going into the jail with several of the townspeople who followed him and his prisoner in. The prisoner was put into the lonesome iron cage, and there left to commune with himself, for as we left, the jail was deserted.

I attended services at one of the little churches, and listened to a sermon that far excelled many I have heard delivered from some of our large metropolitan pulpits. The gray-haired minister with flowing white beard, took for his text the thirty-eighth verse of the eighteenth chapter of St. John, "What is truth?" He drew a word picture of Christ before Pontius Pilate when the Roman Governor went out and said to the Jews, "I find in him no fault at all." There was no shouting, particularly in the wrong place, no hysterical exhorting to "come and be saved," but the sermon was a simple, sane Bible lesson in a style of oratory that was unstrained and natural.

I was told that the minister was a native of the county; that he was a very poor boy, and it was said how he told the story himself, that he had grown up loafing around and drinking whiskey until nearly to a man's estate, when becoming convinced that there was something in life that made it worth while, he took to study, learning to read and write, and finally taking a course for the ministry, he was ordained. His livelihood came chiefly from his farm, and although he had received many calls to preach elsewhere, good salaries having been offered him, he refused them all giving as his reason that he believed his duty was with his own people.

The people as a whole, impressed me as a fine, sturdy lot, and

I shall always remember them for their kind, open-heartedness. As evidence that they were a superior people, I learned that many of the poorer families who had left the county because of the opportunities offered them at the cotton-mills in and around Charlotte, had proved so very efficient that the county gained a reputation for the efficiency of its labor. One mill in particular making very fine, high-priced yarns from Sea Island cotton, had nearly its entire force made up of operatives from Alexander County, and when desiring more help made a point of getting only those from that county.



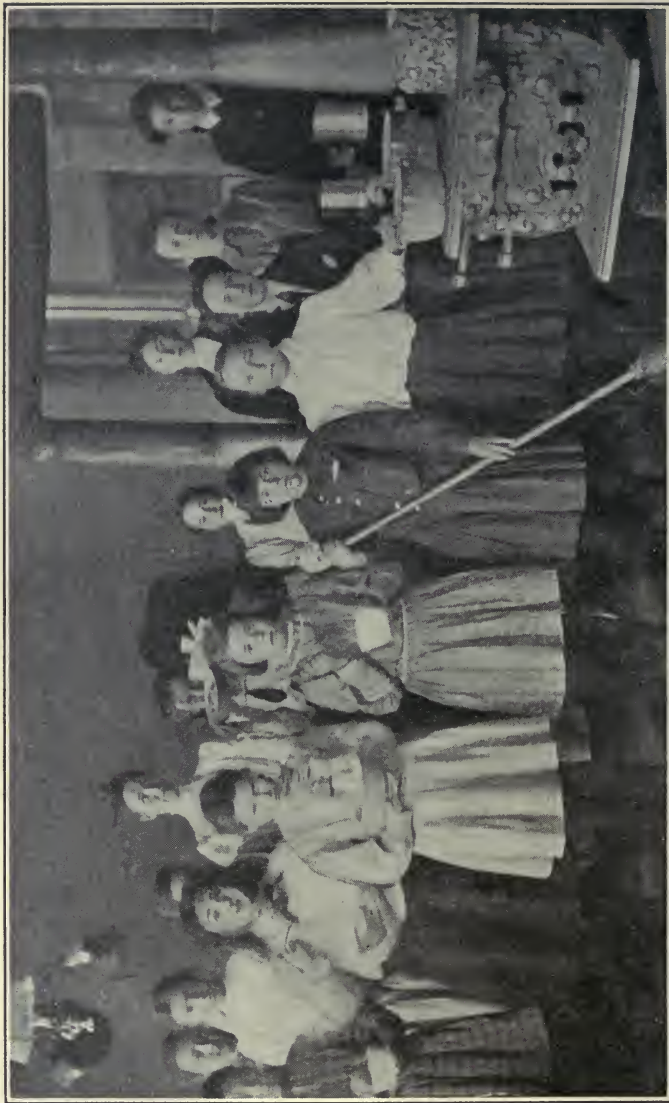
AN ALEXANDER COUNTY FARMER SELLING HIS PRODUCE SIXTY
MILES FROM HOME

CHAPTER X.

PELZER AND ITS DESPOTISM.

PELZER is one of those Southern mill-towns where the corporation owns the land, the houses, and everything else but the very souls of the people, it is said. The place and its conditions have furnished the theme for more write-ups on child labor and capitalistic tyranny, perhaps, than any other mill community in the South. The president of the corporation is represented as a despot who obliges the people to pay for the things they get, and carries his tyranny to the extent of dictating to them the length they shall or shall not insert their stove-pipes into their chimneys. He has his own police force, and he is not controlled by any municipal acts or councils beyond those of his own making, and of course he can make and unmake them as suits his own will and pleasure. He is called the "King of Pelzer."

I was called to Pelzer to act as official photographer to one of our agents, a charming young lady, who was assigned to write a special report upon Welfare Work at the mills. If my impressions of the place had been determined by my stomach, no doubt I should be still breathing imprecations on Pelzer. It may be due to its hotel accommodations in a measure, that other writers and investigators who have been there, have written about the place as they have. My first impression after remaining at the hotel over night, was that the King was very remiss in his government, for not only was the stove-pipe in my room improperly adjusted in the chimney, but the plaster was off the wall in places, and the food was past recognition.



BUT THEY ARE LEARNING TO COOK AT PELZER

Children of mill operatives as they were with their teacher in their cooking class at the time of our investigation. Of course children thus trained make more efficient operatives, better housekeepers and better mothers, yet aspersions are cast upon the captains of industry for doing this work of betterment.

One of my fellow agents searching for the awful conditions of woman and child labor, whom I found already installed in the hotel, said the King had asked him, shortly after his arrival, how he found the accommodation. He had told the King, he said, that it was the best he had had yet. But my fellow-worker had been stopping for several weeks in a mill-village somewhere in North Carolina, where they kept a hog under one of his windows, a blatant calf tied to a stake in front of his door, and heaven only knows what he got to eat. He also explained that since his arrival at Pelzer, the mistress of the hotel had fallen downstairs, breaking her leg, and that made matters worse.

There was another and cheaper hotel, and I decided to try it. There they charged me two prices—one when I went in, and the other when I came out. Upon my remonstrating at the second charge, I was taken to the landlady, who was in bed with her clothes on. She complained of the weather, the high cost of living, and a number of other things. When I called her attention to the fact that I had agreed to pay one price and she was charging me another, she said that I should be glad that she took me in at any price at all, and that I ought to pay her more anyway, because I was one “of ’em ’ar travelin’ men what goes aroun’ doin’ nuthin’ an’ don’t do no work.”

If I wanted a fire in my room, she said, I would have to buy the wood and coal myself, and make the fire just as other folks did, because she wasn’t “goin’ ter wait on nobody.” When she got through talking to me, and incidentally giving her opinion of folks who did no work, I did not dare make any complaint concerning her fare, which consisted of big biscuits served by a fat negress with some of the biscuit dough baked around her finger nails, corn pone, and slices of fat pork smeared with a flour gravy.

I am sure if I had made any complaint about the food, the boarders themselves would have told me that I had better go back where I came from. They were an unsympathetic lot,

when it came to registering a complaint, and they were as independent as if they owned the earth, instead of being owned by the greedy cotton-mill corporation.

I was told a story about these people that not only aptly illustrates their spirit of independence, but also the tyranny of the King of Pelzer. The labor unions of the North had determined to organize the down-trodden mill-operatives of the South, and they sent one of their delegates to Pelzer. He was to point out to the poor, benighted people their sufferings under the yoke of capitalistic tyranny, and bid them organize, rise and throw off their thralldom. But he had scarcely arrived in the place when his plans and movements were reported to the King. The King seated at his office desk listened to the report as presented to him, and then quietly looking up at the clock, said,

"The next train leaves at eleven. Have the constable put him on that train."

The order was obeyed as effectively as though it had been a royal or presidential decree, with a Swiss Guard, or a company of Mexican Rurales to enforce it. A gathering of the oppressed villagers, grinning and snickering, saw the labor delegate off. He protested loudly, and, waving his arms frantically as he stood on the rear of the departing train, hurled imprecations and vows of vengeance at the authors of his discomfiture. At Greenville, where he was fairly dumped off the train, he tried to get out some kind of writ or injunction against the King of Pelzer, but he was warned that Pelzer was private property, and the King had a right to put him off. Returning North he had his revenge by adding his contribution to the propaganda against child labor, capitalistic tyranny, and the awful conditions in the Southern cotton-mills, particularly at Pelzer.

I was told of a somewhat similar episode that occurred in a mill-town in North Carolina, where the cotton-mill company did not own all the land and houses, and there was no "king" as at Pelzer. Upon the arrival of the labor delegate, word

went out that the stranger had come to preach some new doctrine about slavery and oppression. Now you may call a North Carolinian, particularly a mountaineer, poor,—you may tell him that he is behind the times, and doesn't know much, but to try to impress upon him that he is anything but a free-born citizen of the great State of North Carolina, quite able to take care of his own affairs, is to invite a contention at once. And so it happened when the labor delegate began telling these free-born citizens of their oppression by the capitalists and trusts, he found himself confronted by a surly audience, which developed into a noisy crowd. But it appears to have been rather a good-natured one with a pronounced sense of humor. Mid jeers and catcalls, leaders gathering around the poor man, and pretending to extract stones from his pockets as a magician takes eggs and other things from a stage hat, they held them up to his astonished view, accusing him of having secreted them in his pockets in anticipation of trouble. While pretenses were made to get a rail, he was given a chance to run. Run he did, and great tales he had to tell upon his return to union labor headquarters, believing that he had escaped with his life.

I did not see the "King of Pelzer." The nearest I came to seeing him was his outer office, where through the swinging door that admitted his Superintendent to announce my arrival, I heard an exclamation, and the inquiry, "Are they going to send their whole force down here to investigate this one mill?"

The King not wishing to see me, I went away to pursue my duties with the young lady to whom I was assigned as official photographer. Placing myself under her orders I accompanied her all around Pelzer, pointing my camera at cows and cow-sheds, and dimly lighted interiors, and at the library and swimming pool, which the company had provided for the edification of their dependents.

At the library our attention was attracted by a man who had lost both of his hands, having only stumps of arms left

just below his elbows. Here apparently was startling proof of the baneful result of permitting children to work around cotton-mill machinery, for he had lost his hands when a mere child, he said. But upon questioning him further respecting the details of the unfortunate accident that had mutilated him so, he said he had fallen into a cotton-gin on the plantation when he was six years old, before he had ever seen a cotton-mill. He exhibited, with a degree of pride, the number of things he



ONE OF THE HOMES OF PELZER'S DOWNTRODDEN

could do with his stumps of arms, such as opening a book at a given page, turning the pages as he read them, and writing his name. Furthermore, he informed us that it was due to the cotton-mill that he not only had employment by which he earned his living, but that he was able to read and write at all.

At the homes we visited I did not see any such low social state as was observed among the more recent arrivals from the farms at Asheville, yet the people visited had all come from the rural districts, and many of them from the mountains of North

Carolina, within less than a generation, for twenty-five years ago, Pelzer did not exist. There was nothing there then for miles around but barren wastes, and scattered woods surrounding desolate spots with here and there the cabins and shanties of a people known as "poor whites." There were not many of them at that. There was the occasional whiskey-still and outlaw, where now there are fields planted with cotton and terraced with engineering skill to keep the soil from washing away. Valuable crops of cotton are produced where formerly there was nothing, while the great mills of Pelzer rise in their midst, spinning and weaving to clothe the poor and feed them, and make them better than they were. This seemed to me real progress.

Viewing the great industry, not from my own personal inconveniences and likes and dislikes, but from the standpoint of the people themselves, who were effected by it,—the people who had seen and felt the great transformations that had taken place within a decade or two,—was it to be wondered at that they laughed and jeered at the labor delegate forcibly ejected from the community where he had come to preach doctrines, not only foreign to them, but stamped with falsehood upon their very face. We may send our missionaries to China to preach to the heathen, and the heathen may bow his head submissively, but not so that stock of Anglo-Celtic American blood. They are our people, separated from some of the rest of us by only a degree of skill and advancement which we may possess because of the very industry and its resultant wealth which we have had for upwards of a hundred years in advance of them.

True, I suffered inconveniences at their hotels. I was served with slices of fat salt pork, corn bread and hot biscuit at one of them, and charged a price out of all reason for such fare because I was a traveling man "who didn't do no work," and a Yankee too, perhaps one of those who had always interfered with the liberties of the South as the South saw and interpreted them—the Yankees who had not only devastated



ONE OF THE RESULTS OF PELZER AND ITS DESPOTISM

In searching for the awful conditions of woman and child labor, we find the cotton-mill children going to school at the expense of the mill corporation. At the closing exercises for the day, they are preparing to sing our National Anthem around the Flag

their country, but had attempted to put the franchise into the hands of a race recently freed from bondage. And now when their South was building up manufacturing industries by which they were redeeming themselves and the country, again were those meddling Yankees descending upon them with falsehoods and evil doctrines, and agitating for legislation curtailing their liberties and progress.

On every hand I had the evidences of the progress these people were making. In place of the shanties and cabins that once were sprinkled over the sterile wastes of the country, there were painted houses and cotton-fields, and yet when I pointed out these fields to my fellow-worker, a scientific sociologist, graduated at a Western University, and asked him whether he knew why the fields were terraced, he replied that he had not seen them. And when an old, fire-eating Confederate veteran told us that he had been a member of the Klu Klux Klan, this same University graduate and scientist, turning to me, asked,

“What is a Klu Klux?”

With such University men as these—men who study but learn not, listen but hear not, travel but see not, and merely do and think as they are told to do and think—is it strange that our magazines, our newspapers, and even our Government reports and Senatorial speeches are filled with the twaddle that is constantly thrust before us?

I am sure that both of my fellow agents at Pelzer searched diligently for those heartrending conditions we were directed to find, and as I assisted in that search I am obliged to say that we did not find them. The only complaint I am aware of on the part of the mill-operatives, was one registered by a Bohemian who had been brought over from the fatherland with a ship-load of his countrymen to work in the mills because there was not enough native labor to be had. I believe he was the only one of those Bohemians left, and the burden of his complaint concerned the total absence of black bread and beer in that South Carolina town.

In our search for the worse conditions, the lady under whose direction I was required to point my kodak at cow-sheds and other unspeakable necessities, took me to an abode which she described as particularly bad, and which evidently was the worst she had been able to find. She said it was filthy, and as we entered it she gathered her skirts about her intuitively; but as I looked around I failed to discover any filth. True, the housekeeping arrangements were not up to New England standards, or to those of Germany perhaps, whence my co-worker or supervising chief had recently come. Nor had she seen any of the homes of the recent arrivals from the farms at Asheville.

As we entered the house, a raw-boned, typical mountain woman in a pink sunbonnet was engaged in baking a pan of huge biscuits. The plain board walls of the rooms were discolored somewhat by time and smoke. Near the kitchen stove was a barrel containing an assortment of tinware and provisions, conspicuous among which was a side of fat pork. Under the stairs in the room set apart for a dining-room was a pile of cotton-seed. I asked my co-worker to show me the "filth," and she pointed to the cotton-seed, and looked around at the walls with a shrug. That was all, and then she laughed.

"It is all according to what way we view these things," she said. Her first impression of the house was that it was filthy when it was merely untidy.

The head of this family was a typical old North Carolina mountaineer, who told me that he had been away from his native mountains more than ten years. The woman in the sunbonnet, baking the biscuit, was his daughter. She reminded me very much of the woman I had seen in Asheville coming into her house from the back yard with a pink sunbonnet on her head, and a wash-paddle in her hand. She looked enough like her to be her twin sister, but she had eight years advantage of the Asheville woman in that she had been at the cotton-mill ten years, while the other one had been only two.

Other families we visited displayed a much higher state of

social development. Their houses generally were neatly furnished, and some of them, using the words of my co-worker, were furnished with "barbaric splendor." Great gilded picture-frames often adorned the walls, and most wonderful landscapes, embroidered in red yarn on white shams, covered the pillows on the ever-present beds. Big Bibles on center-tables were conspicuous, and occasionally there were other books. Thus did I gather more convincing evidence that the poor families who had been removed from a state of poverty and ignorance in the rural districts had improved their condition upon getting an opportunity to earn money and to spend it in supplying their constantly increasing wants.

There was also that influence for their betterment extended by the mill management or corporation, such as was offered by the lyceum, the free library and reading-room, and "quite an elaborate park, with skating-rink, swimming-pool and the beginning of a zoo."¹

We visited and photographed a class in cooking, which was a part of the welfare work paid for and maintained by the corporation, as well as the lyceum, library, reading-room, park, swimming-pool, and everything else established for the improvement of the community. I have since regretted that I did not photograph the man who had lost his hands when a child on the farm by tumbling into a cotton-gin. It would have made a remarkable exhibit to place alongside of those exhibited by the representatives of the special interests who seek with the aid of the camera to prove their contentions that the cotton-mill is detrimental to the interests of the poor people who

¹ The dozen words quoted above are all that appear in the Commissioner's Report as the result of the young lady's study of welfare work at Pelzer, although I believe she gave fully three weeks to the subject, besides a week of my own time was taken in making photographs, which never were used. On the other hand, in Vol. XVI of the Commissioner's Report this statement is made: "In a city there are a great many things that enrich the poor man's life that he does not have to pay for directly out of his income. There are parks and playgrounds, baths, libraries, art galleries, public lectures, etc. But the cotton-mill family has none of these. Its members must depend on their own financial resources and upon the limited opportunities of the mill village for all their pleasures and for any stimulating influences which may enter into their lives."

obtain employment in them, and through them to the coming generations.¹

I think one of the most impressive results of the Pelzer despotism that I saw was the public school. My co-worker or supervisor directed me to be present at the exercises closing the daily session. In the center of a plaza in front of the school building was a tall flag-pole with our national flag floating gaily from its top. Promptly at the hour for dismissal, a



VIEW IN PELZER PARK

Showing Swimming Pool and Band Kiosk. And yet the Government Report, Vol. XVI., says, "the cotton mill family has none of these"

boy began beating a drum, to the sound of which a host of bright-faced children came marching out of the school into the plaza. They were all neatly dressed and appeared with glowing, happy faces.

This exhibit alone seemed to me enough to convince any fair-

¹" Perhaps you are weary of child labor pictures. Well, so are the rest of us, but we propose to make you and the whole country so sick and tired of the whole business that when the time for action comes, child labor pictures will be records of the past," Lewis W. Hine, in the "Proceedings of the National Conference of Charities and Corrections," for 1909, page 357.

minded man or woman that the southern cotton-mill, in this instance at least, was a benefactor. Here was a gathering of school-children hardly a generation removed from the poverty and isolation of their ancestral homes, and this at one of the great Southern cotton-mills where the evils of child labor had been depicted most unsparingly. And not only that, but here were those very children who had been represented as toiling through man's long working-day, in reality marching in a gay procession to the roll of a drum, out of their school-house to go to their homes.¹

No doubt some of the fathers and mothers of these very children, in days gone by, were little doffers and spinners in the cotton-mill. They might have been held up in their day, fresh from their crude mountain homes of poverty and decay, as specimens of "adolescent, weed-like youths" and "tiny spinners" being murdered by their occupations in the "close, confining, lint-laden atmosphere of the cotton-mill,"² but here was the living proof of the actual result, half a thousand ruddy-faced, well-dressed school-children performing their evening exercises before going home.

As we stood looking at them, a group of younger ones went dancing around the pole which bore aloft that emblem of liberty which they never would have seen, perhaps, had those little doffer boys and child spinners of the previous generation been barred from the cotton-mill. As I, too, looked up at the flag, I thought what a cruel mockery of that liberty were those misrepresentations by paid agents seeking to bar other children from coming down from their isolated mountain homes, and

¹ "In July, out of five hundred and fifty-seven children between the ages of six and fourteen years, five hundred and fifty were attending school. Of seven hundred and fifty-six children under the age of six; one hundred and thirty-two were in the village kindergarten. Of the one thousand three hundred and thirteen children in the village, only two hundred and thirty-three could not read or write. This is taking into account the very small children and babies," report of Hon. E. J. Watson, Commissioner of Agriculture, Commerce and Industries of the State of South Carolina, 1909.

² Quoted from Lewis W. Hine, "Social Photography: How the Camera May Help in the Social Uplift" in the "Proceedings of the National Conference of Charities and Corrections, 1909."



READY AT THEIR COUNTRY'S CALL

"Smyth Rifles," Company C, 1st Reg. S. C. N. G. One of the results of child labor. But the camera of the Social Uplift Workers in showing their child-labor pictures, does not show such as these.

doing precisely what the parents or grandparents of these children had done. As I thus thought, the childish voices burst forth singing our National anthem, and then my thoughts reverted to the "King of Pelzer," who for twenty-five years had been directing this mighty work. And he once a rebel, I believe, who bore arms against that flag whose song his children sang. In view of the unjust misrepresentations and bitter allegations made by some of our politicians and pro-



HOW THE CAMERA LIES

Photographed by Lewis W. Hine and represented as a child worker in the mill. The child never worked and the photograph was obtained by deception.

fessional reformers, who would blame him if he should still feel the rebel spirit way down in his heart? Yet what an example of patriotism was presented by those children dancing around our flag and singing the National anthem, due to the great work already accomplished by the "King of Pelzer and his Despotism."

Nor was this all. His company of Rifles of the State National Guard, made up of the very mill boys whom, the Socialistic reformers and labor committees tell us, are being

stunted in growth and "murdered," present as fine a type of young manhood ready at their country's call as may be found anywhere, and I doubt whether many of our Northern cities present any better.

Furthermore, Pelzer with its village population of five thousand souls, has neither a poor house, asylum or jail, nor a saloon nor immoral house of any sort. No loafers are allowed to abide in this place, and if a man or his family, does not behave himself, he has to get out. Its entire police force consists of one little old constable who doesn't deign even to wear a uniform, and an assistant. In this respect, it certainly has not some of those many "things that enrich the poor man's life" in our cities, as subsequently complained of in the Commissioner of Labor's Reports. And yet this is the industry that the Rev. Dr. A. J. McKelway, Southern Secretary of the National Child Labor Committee, terms the "Herod Among Industries."

CHAPTER XI.

A MOUNTAIN COUNTY.

AFTER fulfilling my assignment as official photographer to the lady assigned to study welfare work at the mills, I was directed to return to the mountains, and in connection with my study of conditions in the rural districts, investigate conditions at a small mill on the French Broad River, some twenty miles below Asheville. It was one of those little mills in out-of-the-way places, the site for which had been selected, as reported by one of our agents, in order to more conveniently employ children in violation of the child-labor law, and at less risk of being discovered by chance inquisitors. The name of the place was Marshall, the county-seat of Madison County.

As I gleaned some interesting information about the county, its history and its people, it seems well to give it here. The County was carved out of Buncombe, the name given to the territory lying beyond the Blue Ridge in Western North Carolina, and which was almost a State unto itself. Prior to any railroad, a State road wound up over the Blue Ridge from South Carolina, descended to the plateau on the opposite side, and with the trend of the French Broad River eventually followed its sinuous curves under cliffs and jagged promontories down through its gap in the Smoky Mountains into Tennessee. This road formed the chief artery of trade between the South and West. Over it herds of cattle, horses, mules and hogs were driven from the farms of the West to the cotton markets of the South.

That section of country lying in the roughest parts of the mountains was a wild region infested by robbers and outlaws.

Many are the blood-curdling tales still told of their treacherous deeds, for they appear to have been executed with great cunning rather than with boldness. They tell of the traveler seeking the shelter of some lone cabin, and of the woman brain-ing him with an axe while he was partaking of her seemingly hospitable fare, or of her man creeping stealthily up to the bed the traveler had been given for the night, and slitting his throat with a long hunting-knife. As such tales came to me I was inclined to receive them with incredulity.

The country appears to have been settled first by the hunter and trapper, who contested the ground with the Cherokee. He built his rude cabin in some sheltered cove between mountains, and left the task of raising a scanty crop of corn in the clearing, which he made, to his wife and children, while he sought the game that abounded in the surrounding forest. Close on his heels came the refugee from war and rebellion, and from the stockade and prison. As these neighbors encroached upon the hunter's domain, and game decreased in the locality, he moved on, leaving his cabin and corn patch to whomsoever might occupy it. The pioneer farmer settled in the fertile valleys, while the refugee appears to have been content with the abandoned cabin and corn patch, eking out an existence by hunting and fishing a little, while his wife raised the corn. With some of these people, escaped convicts no doubt, and descendants of the indentured servants shipped from Newgate in the early days of our country's history, robbery and murder when the occasion presented itself, were but steps.

The Muster Ground for a section of the country now embraced in Madison County, was at a place called Duell or Jewell Hill. It appears to have been a small settlement where the mountain people gathered from many miles around, to transact their business, to shoot at targets, drink whiskey and fight. The fights were usually hand-to-hand conflicts between representative bullies, who fought with all the barbarity of old-time Celtic chieftains struggling for the supremacy of their respective clans. Stripped to the waist they fought

savagely, tooth and nail. There were no rules against an unfair blow. To get a treacherous grip, to gouge out an eye, to bite off an ear, a finger or thumb, was merely considered a means to the end.

A graphic account of one of these fights was given me by an old veteran of the civil war, who had witnessed it when he was a small boy. He had prevailed on his father, a well-to-do proprietor, trader and farmer, a descendant of pioneer stock from Virginia, to take him along to the Muster Ground where he was going to transact some business. While the father was transacting the business, the boy wandered by himself, looking at the men in their long linsey-woolsey shirts and coon-skin caps with the bushy tail usually dangling behind. They were accompanied by their women, long, gaunt creatures, enured to privation and hardship. There was drinking and carousing until the day began to wane, and then the fight was on. Two wild-looking men were glaring at each other fiercely. There was an exchange of oaths and curses, as the women appeared to become more active spectators than the men, for they set up a general clamor, some of them laying hold of the long rifles and knives carried by the men as they formed a ring around. Then the two swearing, cursing contestants threw away their coon-skin caps, as the crowd surged back to give them room. Drawing their long hunting shirts over their heads, they threw them aside and at each other they went with savage ferocity. The wild scene that followed was of such a barbaric nature,—the gaunt, uncouth-looking women dominating the ring formed around, with their wild cries, gesticulations, and yells, so thoroughly frightened the recounter of the event, that he ran for his horse, and without waiting for his father, fled homewards as fast as his beast could carry him. Not many years afterwards his father was shot dead in the yard of his own home, by some one of this very class of mountain men.

When that part of the country was definitely marked off for the county of Madison, it was deemed advisable to have

its seat of government near the center, which would bring it somewhere down on the French Broad River which cuts the county in twain. It is related facetiously that the topography of the country is so rough and broken, the farmer in cultivating the steep mountain sides, runs his furrows up and down them so that when he is ready to dig his potatoes all he has to do is to open the furrows, and the potatoes roll down the mountain into receptacles placed ready to catch them.



WHERE THE LAND IS SO STEEP

So it was that great difficulty was experienced in selecting a level place for the proposed county-seat. Hot Springs presented the only one, but that was considered too near the Tennessee line, as though the Tennesseans might invade the county and capture its seat of government, for there exists a feeling between the inhabitants of the two States akin to that felt by two foreign nations.

A small triangular space on the river about mid-way between the Buncombe County line and the Tennessee line was finally

selected. The usual county court-house and jail were erected for the county business, and the embryo place was called Marshall. Then came the civil war, whereupon Marshall with its surrounding territory appears to have been just outside the Confederate lines, with none of its own to speak of. Union in its sentiments, the mountaineers in that region with few exceptions, could not be prevailed upon to enter the Confederate ranks. Rebel details from the frontier post at Asheville were sent to conscript them, but they would not be conscripted. Many ran off to the Union army in Tennessee. Then Confederates would come in from Tennessee and join those from around Asheville, and between the two, Marshall and that section of the county east of the French Broad River, was a country between two conflicting forces which suffered much.

After the war Marshall languished. The growing of a little corn and the manufacture of whiskey, were about the only industries existent in the surrounding mountains. Then the Federal Government undertook to put a stop to the whiskey-making, and that brought about more trouble. The mountaineers thought the making of whiskey was their inalienable right, just as the growing of their corn. They could not understand why the Federal Government should interfere with them, particularly as they had been for the Union all through the war. But the whiskey-making had to be stopped, and so Marshall became the headquarters for stopping it, and Marshall's industry consisted of capturing moonshiners and reputed bad men, putting them in jail and trying them. The officers got their fees for capturing them, and putting them in jail, while lawyers springing up galore, got their fees for getting them out again.

It was a gloomy, stormy morning, the day I first entered this place to study its people and their industries. I was guided along its one long street to a hotel, and after a dinner that gave me my first favorable impression, I was invited to a seat in the office before a soft-coal, spluttering fire in an open

grate. A very fat man sat opposite the seat I took, while a much smaller man answering to the name Claude, sat between us with a poker with which he took sundry jabs at the fire.

It hailed and sleeted outside, and while the storm raged, being very tired, and the heat from the fire making me sleepy, perhaps, I dozed in my chair. Suddenly I awoke to see the fat man indicating me with a nod, and then in a peculiar lisping drawl, say he wished he could sleep. Turning his gaze upon the little man seated between us, he continued:

"Why, do you know, Claude, I haven't had a good sleep for twenty years. If I war' ter go ter sleep at the bottom of a six story buildin', an' a snow-flake war ter fall onter the roof, 'twould wake me up, an' I couldn't git no sleep no more."

The little man with his poker poised as if about to poke the fire, turned his face up to the fat man's expectantly, as if waiting to hear the rest. The fat man never smiled as he looked down at the little one, shaking his head sadly, but whether the sadness was due to the little man's not appreciating his humor, or to his loss of sleep for twenty years, I do not know.

Then the little man spoke most seriously:

"I know what's good for thet!" said he, getting a new hold on his poker. "You jes' try readin' a book! Get a book an' lay back in your bed, an' jes' read it, an' you'll drop off ter sleep in no time!"

"Waal, neow, Claude," said the fat man with a drawl full of pathos, but for the humor it conveyed, "thet's a pretty pert thing ter tell a feller what's like me. Why, I'd never go to sleep in a thousand years readin' a book, fer I can't read."

But the humor was lost on Claude. His fire evidently needed poking. He went at it slowly but surely, as he did everything else, while the fat man looking down upon him snickered softly.

I no longer slept but listened. I was in the heart of that section of the country that I wanted to know so much about, and here were two characters interesting in themselves, shedding a good deal of light upon it. The fat man had found in the little one an attentive listener, even though his sense of

humor was dull. It seemed that the fat one was traveling for a clothing-house out of Knoxville, and he had just driven into Marshall from a trip among the mountain selling clothing, where he described the roads as so bad, and the mud so sticky that it pulled the shoes off the horses' feet. His recent experiences as he related them were filled with rare good humor which no combination of words and letters could reproduce in his inimitable way of telling them or describing the characters he had met as he described them, with their mannerisms and peculiarities of speech. He was a mountaineer himself, and could describe them with inimitable drollery. One of the recent experiences related was that with an old store-keeper who greeted him with a most woe-be-gone expression, and in accents as if something terrible had happened, said,

"I am so sorry for yer I don't know what to do. I am dreadfully sorry, but hit can't be helped. I am so sorry—indeed!"

The fat man thought something had happened to himself, and looking down at his feet, and then at his hands intuitively, to discover the cause of the man's pity, he asked:

"Why, what is the matter?"

"I am so sorry for you," repeated the store-keeper, in his doleful refrain. "I can't buy any of your clothes this time."

"He made me feel like a pauper," said the fat man, "an' I jes' tole 'im ter go ter hell."

Perhaps my attention would not have been called to the extremities to which the poor people in the mountains are sometimes taxed, had it not been for my listening to the talk of this droll fellow. In describing a certain notorious character, he told how having been appointed a tax-collector, he had got an overdue tax from a poor man whose only possession was a cow. He went to the man's cabin, and throwing a rope over the cow's head led her away, while the owner swore from his cabin door that he would kill him, and the poor fellow's ragged children gathering around with their cups cried for the cow's milk.

He called this character "Ole Wile Bill," saying he had stopped with him the night before. He described the man as having a stockade built around his house and store to prevent anyone making an attack on him unawares. The only means of approaching him was through the gate facing his store door where he was usually on guard himself. He described the house as having a cellar to it, which is unusual in the mountains, and as the fat man evidently had no name for the cellar, he called it a great deep hole in the ground, like a cave and very dark, "an' full o' good lick."

The fat man said it was late when he arrived at Wild Bill's place, and told him he wanted him to keep him over night. Wild Bill was defective in his speech, and the fat man imitated his lisping, stuttering drawl, telling how he had told him that he had better go on to the next house.

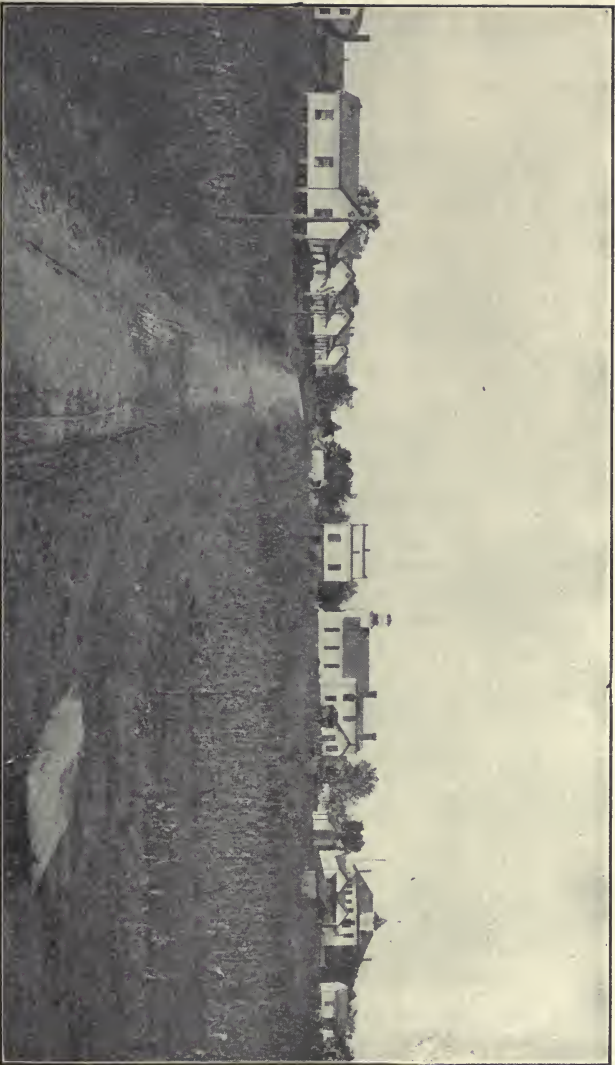
"'Tisn't because I don't want ter keep yer," said Wild Bill, "but my advice ter yer is not ter stop hyar; yer'd better go on."

But the fat man, knowing Wild Bill, insisted upon staying. After supper, Wild Bill lighted a candle, and showed him up in the loft to bed. Sleet and snow were blowing in from an unshuttered window, which Wild Bill vainly strove to close. He stuttered and swore, and finally ripping out a big round oath, turning to the fat man said:

"Thar neow, damn yer; didn't I tell yer, yer'd better go on ter the next house. They'r fixed fer keepin' folks an' could a' kept yer comfortably. I reckon yer wish yer'd gone now, don't yer? You city folks hev' to hev' so much splanin' to; can't understan' nuthin' nohow!"

But the fat man didn't mind the snow and sleet. He had plenty of warm "kivers," but whether the falling snow-flakes kept him awake he did not say. He then told how he and Wild Bill had fixed up "to give a party."

"You see thar's a feller down ter Knoxville, what has been arter me ter bring 'im up hyar in these mountains an' show 'im some o' the ways. So I hev' fixed hit up for 'im with



WHERE MOONSHINING IS A THING OF THE PAST

Graded school and village street of a cotton-mill in Alamance County, in which county Edwin M. Holt founded a mill in 1837 and wove the first colored cotton fabric ever manufactured in the South.

Wile Bill. We're goin' ter hev' a party an give 'im a real good time thet'll make 'is 'air stand up." And the fat man snickered at the thoughts of that party he and Wild Bill had planned to give to the stranger.

With his hands on his knees, and his fat sides shaking, he laughed heartily as Claude, holding the poker, again looked up into his face expectantly, his usually dull countenance lighted up this time as though he might laugh.

"Thar won't be no real killin'," said the fat man by way of explanation, "but we'll make that feller from Knoxville think thar's goin' to be. Maybe he'll think he's one o' the killed before thet party is over, but Wile Bill will see to it thet no harm comes to 'im, an' yer know thet Wile Bill with a gun, is one o' the peaceablist men you ever seed. He won't 'low no real killin' unless he does it 'imself."

Then laughing again with suppressed snickers, the fat man added by way of conclusion,

"When that city feller gits back ter Knoxville, he'll hev some o' the biggest stories ter tell 'bout the mountain folks what's never been hear'd on anywhere else. I reckon they'll beat some o' them 'air stories Claude, you read about in them ar' books o' yourn."

But Claude didn't laugh. He merely looked at the fat man with the expectant laugh that never came, and then turned to poking the fire again.

CHAPTER XII.

COTTON SPINNING VERSUS MOONSHINING.

FROM a little straggling village under the cliffs bordering the river, I found Marshall had grown. There was apparently little room for it to grow, nevertheless it had grown. The railroad track had been pushed out to the very edge of the river, so that the original town under the cliffs could have one long street at least. The river was crossed by a long iron bridge, and a big slice of the rocks and mountains on the other side was taken in as a part of the incorporated town.

From the window where I did my writing, I could see why this had been done. A rock-bound cliff had been blown away, and there, close to the river, was the cotton-mill. Straggling up a ravine between the hills beyond were little painted cottages of the mill people, and there were other cottages in nooks and hollows down near the river, and up above on the mountain, wherever there appeared to be room for one. There was one almost on the edge of a promontory, so close, it seemed to me when I went up there, that there was danger of the children rolling from the front porch, down the rocky cliffs to the river many feet below.

The little old county-seat had not only spread across the river, taking in the cotton-mill and its surrounding houses, but it had fairly climbed up the mountain and the rocks on its own side. Terraces were cut along the rocky sides to make room for homes to the very top of the mountain overlooking the river and the country beyond.

Down in the town proper, right under a cliff, a new courthouse, equal to any in the State, was in course of erection, its

roof so close to the top of the cliff it seemed one could easily jump from the cliff on to it. A modern, commodious jail near the river had been completed, taking the place of the old structure with its rude iron prison-cage in the middle of the room; but, as I heard a traveling man say,

“They no longer had any prisoners to put into it.”

When the money was needed for these improvements, the little town was able to borrow all it wanted from Northern financiers on the strength of its showing, and this when several other mountain county-seats could not borrow a cent.

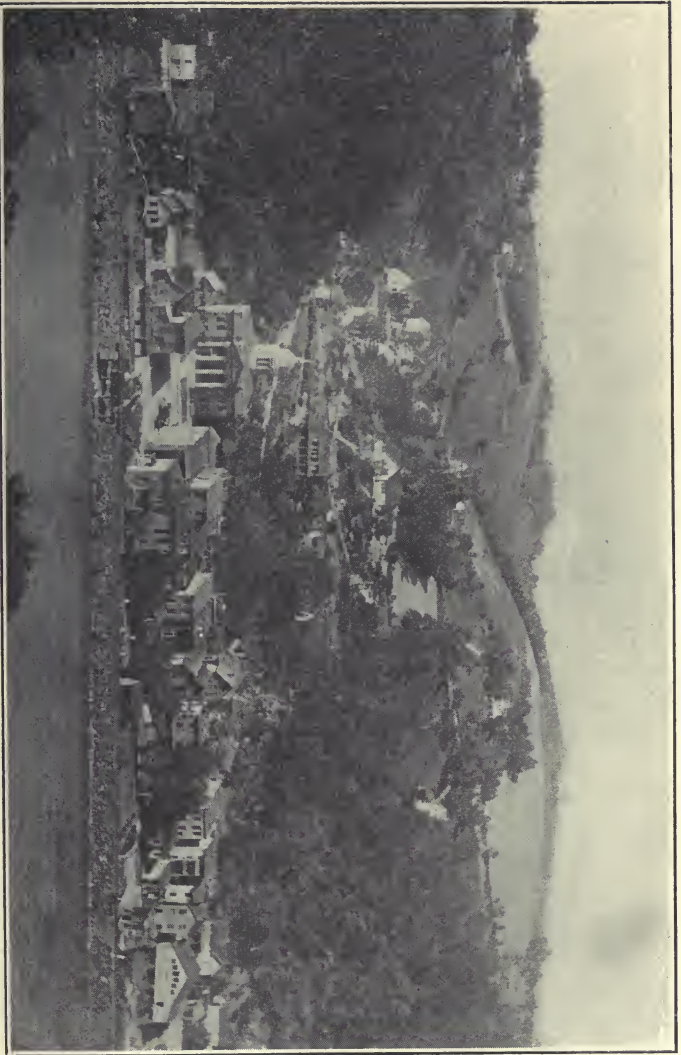
The census returns for the previous decade gave the entire population of Marshall as three hundred and thirty-seven. Like numberless other county-seats, it had not a single industry other than that of hunting up “moonshiners” and other violators of the laws, putting them in jail and getting them out again. While it had lawyers, and ministers too, preaching the salvation of souls, it did not have a public school or a workshop of any kind.

The Board of Home Missions of the Presbyterian Church, having made the discovery that it had no school, sent down its missionaries to establish one. A side of the mountain overlooking the straggling street and river was terraced, and a fine building was erected and equipped as the “Marshall Academy,” with a corps of teachers from the North to carry on the laudable work of education. But Marshall continued to slumber on, waking up periodically when court convened to bring the jailed “moonshiners” and alleged murderers and other criminals to trial, when the mountaineers from the surrounding country would gather in with pistols and booze to attend court, and have a blowout generally, and not infrequently finish with a murder or two.

Among the lawyers there was one who conceived the idea that what Marshall needed was a cotton-mill. He was a self-made man, having been a poor orphan, but reared by a well-to-do mountain farmer. He was a practical man. When he saw family after family leaving their native mountains for the

HOW MARSHALL HAS GROWN

Before the building of the little mill on the other side of the river, there were fourteen prisoners in its little old jail at one time awaiting trial for murder. Now that it has a new jail, and a manufacturing industry, the jail is empty.



southern cotton-mills, instead of wasting his time and deploring child labor, and reciting panegyrics on education, he said in a very matter-of-fact way,

“What we want is a cotton-mill right here. The reason our people are leaving us is, they want work, and they are going where they can get it.” And he proposed giving Marshall a cotton-mill.

Cotton-mill men said a mill could not be made to pay in any such inaccessible place as Marshall; that the transportation charges were too high, and the labor problem a difficult one; no one knew how to weave or spin at Marshall, but the lawyer replied that the mountains could furnish labor that would learn; the river would furnish the water power, and above all the mountains furnish a climate unexcelled. With dog-like persistency he kept hammering away on his project, while practical mill men looking for big dividends could see nothing in it. Finally a young man from another part of the State, whose school had been a cotton mill, and his college a machine-shop, and who had more enterprise than money, looked over the field and pronounced his faith in it.

The lawyer formed the company, and while he scoured the country, selling the stock to friends and neighbors, and to farmers who had saved something from their former tobacco crops and whiskey making, the practical mill man blasted away the cliff on the other side of the river and laid the foundation for the cotton-mill. He selected the sites for the homes of the future mill people, directed their building and that of the mill. He dammed up the river that was to supply the power, and finally, when the mill building was completed, he installed the machinery that was to spin the cotton. Within six months after the wheels began to turn, that cotton-mill with its woman and child labor had more than doubled the population of Marshall, and was doing more for those poor people of the mountains than all the missionaries and schools had done in the history of their mountain work.

The cotton-mill itself was a very small affair, and from a

manufacturer's standpoint it was hardly worth considering as representative of the great textile industry in the South, but from the standpoint at which I was instructed to study it—its effect upon the employed and the community at large—it presented a most convincing example of what such an industry, however small, may do. As already indicated, the county was known throughout the State, and even beyond, for its lawlessness and its crimes. To my knowledge, one of the lawyers at Marshall declared that he had defended fifty-two persons indicted for homicide during his practice. Another attorney, now a member of Congress, told me that he had defended so many tried for murder, he could not begin to count them all. These homicides were all committed in that one county known as "Bloody Madison."

Now let us see what the cotton-mill had done for Marshall within four years. Upon its establishment the population of Marshall more than doubled. That means that fully three hundred and thirty-seven ¹ individuals came into Marshall from the mountains, lured by the inducements of work that promised them a regular stipend. They did not come individually, but in groups or families, some member of which was assured employment. Thirty-eight per cent. of the total number of individuals constituting these groups or families found employment as wage-earners, and fully eighty per cent. of these wage-earners were women and children. Bear these last figures well in mind. Eighty per cent. of the toilers in this one little cotton-mill community were women and children! I doubt whether those who have cried loudest against woman and child labor have ever been able to show any such high percentage of woman and child toilers as this in any one community.

The three hundred and odd individuals arriving in family groups at the cotton-mill, came from isolated coves among the mountains in many instances notorious for lawlessness, and

¹ The U. S. Census returns for 1900 gave the population as three hundred and thirty-seven. Upon the starting up of the mill it immediately doubled. At the time of my investigation it had increased to more than nine hundred.

where they frankly confessed they had found it barely possible to raise enough corn upon which to subsist. They were not a bad or wicked people. They were victims of circumstances, that is all. But the country whence many of them came had a notoriously bad name.

For my part, I found them simple in their habits, kindly disposed, but proud and sensitive to a remarkable degree. I think I visited every family belonging to the mill community, and the one requisite I found for getting information was to be as one of them, meeting them on a plane of equality, and to refrain from showing surprise at any unfamiliar scene or circumstance, and above all not to show any disposition to criticise or condemn them. I came to know them very well, and I would not for a moment have it thought that I was condemning them as bad in any sense whatever. As a rule, they appeared to me much more thrifty and active than those recent arrivals from the mountain farms I had first seen at Asheville. Possibly my closer relations with this class of people had sufficiently familiarized me with their mode of life to soften the contrast presented by some of them and other people I was more familiar with.

While many of the men professed to be able to read and write, I found that when put to the test, they could not, or when they could read at all they could barely spell out the simplest words, and many of those who said they were able to write, could hardly sign their own names. They confessed to me that they had had no educational advantages, or whatever they had had were limited. One old fellow epitomized the situation upon my asking him if he could read and write, by exclaiming,

"What! Me read and write! Why, if I had larned ter read an' write I could ha' been a Bishop, or a President, or some other great thing by this time!"

And thus it seemed to me that the great majority of these people, in spite of their many shortcomings and the bad reputation their county bore, were extraordinarily intelligent,



PRODUCTS OF ISOLATION, IGNORANCE AND VICE

A poor family in Madison County without the advantages presented by a cotton-mill. Old Aunt Polly, some of her children and grand-children. All were said to be illegitimate. At the time the picture was taken, another daughter was ill with pneumonia and was without medical attendance. Neighbors said their corn had given out and they had scarcely anything to eat. Such conditions as these existed in the hills of New England before the establishment of cotton-mills.

bright and witty, and capable of greatness when given the opportunity. And the cotton-mill was now giving them an opportunity which they had never had before. Several told me freely that they had made "blockade" whiskey in the mountains before coming to the mill, and they did not see much harm in it anyway, only when they got to drinking too much of the stuff that "made the drunk come," then trouble began. One old "moonshiner" or "blockader" as they are more generally termed in the mountains—told me that he had made it all his life until he came to the cotton-mill.

This ex-moonshiner was a quaint fellow, whose physical growth evidently had not been checked in childhood. If he could have been made to straighten himself out, he would have measured considerably more than six feet. He usually walked with his massive shoulders bent forward, his long arms hanging down slightly in front of his body, and his big-boned hands dangling several inches below his short coat-sleeves. Though awkward in appearance, he was unusually intelligent, and a veritable wag in his way. In relating some of his experiences as a "blockader," he said the biggest licking he ever got was when he was a man grown and his father, having got religion, found him up in the mountain making blockade whiskey on a Sunday. It was not quite clear whether he got the licking for making the whiskey, or for making it on a Sunday.

Among the tales he recounted was one in particular illustrative of a phase of life in the mountains which may in a measure account for the reputation for lawlessness and crime the people bore. The tale as he told it was piquant with rare humor, although it was a tale of bloodshed and murder. He described the gathering of his friends and neighbors at what they called a "party"—such, I presumed, as the fat man with the assistance of Wild Bill proposed getting up for the edification of the city man at Knoxville. As the "party" progressed, and no doubt the participants had imbibed pretty freely of their own "blockade" whiskey, one of the men persisted in throw-

ing stones, seemingly in a playful manner, at some of the others.

"Neow, Jem," commanded one of the participants, "yer've got ter stop thet 'ar' throwing rocks. Thar's no fun in et fer us, an' some on us'll git hurt."

But Jem had no intention of stopping. He continued his rock throwing playfully.

"Neow, Jem," finally called out the other man, "if yer throw another rock, I'll kill yer."

A sickly grin fluttered around the corners of Jem's mouth. He was either bent on committing suicide or he would not take the other man's dare, for he threw "another rock," and the other man drawing his gun deliberately shot him dead.

Jem was picked up and carried into the cabin where he was placed on a bed, friends gathering around. The relator of the narrative was standing by the bed, when one of the women asked for a chew of tobacco. Pulling out his tobacco, he was in the act of handing it to the woman when another fellow excited by jealousy over his wife's relations with someone else, poked his gun through the partially opened door and fired. The bullet was intended for the man standing just beyond my friend the blockader, but as he handed the woman his tobacco he moved just enough in the path of the bullet to receive it in a delicate part of his own anatomy. As a result he was laid up many months hovering between life and death, subjected to the rudest kind of surgery and medical treatment.

As illustrative of the wit of these rude people, was another story told me of a "blockader," who upon being informed that the revenue officers were coming, began rolling a barrel up the mountain in plain view of the officers. They began shouting for him to stop, but instead of heeding them he redoubled his efforts to get away with the barrel. The raiders made for the man, and finally succeeding in closing in upon him. As the chief advanced with loaded revolver, the "blockader," propping himself up against the apparently heavy barrel and wiping his brow, asked in the most innocent manner imaginable:

"What's the matter with you anyhow?"

"We've got you!" exclaimed the officer breathlessly. "We want that barrel and you too."

"Huh!" exclaimed the blockader. "Ef thet bar'll is all yer want, ye' kin hev' et," and the officer seizing the barrel found it empty.

"I reckon a feller kin roll an empty bar'll home ef he wants ter," said the mountaineer, looking at their evident disgust.

By the time they had recovered from their surprise, and had gotten back to the place where the man had had his still, it was gone and there was no evidence that their prisoner had been violating the law.

It was from this class of people that the cotton-mill labor was mostly recruited. In pursuing my investigations among them, I not only met with a native urbanity that was pleasing, but I was treated most kindly by the town officials, as well as by the officials of the cotton-mill. Every facility was extended for carrying on my work, and the hospitality of Marshall will long be remembered by me. The mill President aided me in getting correct data for my schedules, not only by giving me access to his pay-rolls, which was the only way to get the wages and earnings of the employees with any degree of accuracy, but with the assistance of the Secretary, he helped me tabulate the number of days worked and the earnings of each individual scheduled for the entire year, which required considerable time of both himself and Secretary.

I have stated that the number of individuals drawn from the mountains to the mill, approximated something over three hundred; that thirty-eight per cent. of them were employed in the mill; and that eighty per cent. of those employed were women and children. Now, the rule laid down by the sociological theorist and the special interests supported by them, is that the father of the family should be the wage-earner, while the women of the family remain at home and the children go to school; and as this is not the rule among the very poor, they insist upon making it the rule by legislation.

Let us suppose that such legislation had been in effect at Marshall, inhibiting the employment of women and children.

The result would be no cotton-mill, and the three hundred individuals added to Marshall's population by the mill would still be in their isolated cabin homes in the mountains, with their "blockade" whiskey, occasional revenue raids, "parties,"



WHERE THE COTTON-MILL GOES UP, MOONSHINING GOES DOWN

Captured whiskey stills destroyed at a county court house.

and gun-play; for without the nimble fingers of the young women and children the cotton-mill could not have come into existence.

Take, for example, my big-boned mountaineer who had made "blockade" whiskey all his life, and who gave the graphic account of his being shot while handing a woman his tobacco at the "party" after one of their friends had been shot to

death. What would he do inside of a cotton-mill? He could neither spin nor doff nor learn to weave; yet our advocates of woman and child labor laws say, "Make the fathers work and support the family."

This ex-blockader had eight children, all girls and wage-earners in the cotton-mill. My first interview with him was in his home. His wife was there, spitting tobacco-juice occasionally into a rusty-looking stove, for the new mill-houses were furnished with stoves instead of fireplaces. Several of the daughters were at home, for, as is usual, they did not work in the mill every day. When I asked the father why he had left the farm for the mill, he said,

"Now I'll jes' explain thet t' yer. My chil'ren air all gals, an' ter tell yer th' truth 'bout et, I couldn't raise enough corn on th' farm, with all their help, to feed 'em."

In answer to my query which his girls preferred, the cotton-mill or the farm, he replied,

"Waal, you jes' ask 'em 'bout thet," and as I turned to the girls with the question they simply laughed significantly as I had been laughed at many times upon asking the same question.

"I'll jes' tell yer how et is," said the father by way of further explanation. "Sometimes these gals o' ours git to complaining a little like, an' then all I got ter do is ter say ter the ole lady, I reckon we'd better pack up an' go back ter the farm. That's enough! We don't hear anything more outer 'em gals."

With respect to the father loafing, with his eight girls the wage-earners, I found his case typical of others having their children working in the mill. While his name was not on the mill pay-rolls, and I met him frequently when apparently he had nothing to do, I found that he owned a team of mules; that he hauled cotton and took contract work for hauling lumber and other team work; and, having rented a piece of land, he was making arrangements to do his spring ploughing with the view of putting in a crop of wheat and corn. And this I found approximately the case in every mill family at

Marshall. Unless it were a father that was old, infirm or decrepit, and I remember only one such in all the families I scheduled, they were all doing something. One was a miller, for example, working in a grist mill; another was a stonemason building culverts for the railroad, while a third was town marshal or policeman.

The policeman's family presented an interesting example of what the cotton-mill had done for some of the poor mountain families. I found the family installed in their new cottage on a high bluff overlooking the river above Marshall proper. The mother told me that before the mill was built they were living on a little farm a few miles out, where they found it exceedingly difficult to raise enough corn for their subsistence. They left their mountain farm for the mill because of the employment offered to their children. With their savings, mostly from the earnings of those children, they had purchased their piece of land and had built their own home, and now those same children, who had worked and helped pay for the home, had left the mill and were going to school.

I had free access to the mill at all times, which I availed myself of frequently, and never was I able to discover anyone working unwillingly or beyond his or her strength. True, nearly all the operatives were young, and sixty per cent. of them were females. While I have not the exact figures at hand, I dare say that fully one-half of the operatives were between the ages of twelve and sixteen, a fact which I wish to emphasize for the very reason of the hue and cry raised over the employment of these children. Another point that I would call attention to is that four years previously to my investigations, when the mill began operations, there was even a greater percentage of women and children employed, thus showing that as the people came in from the rural districts and developed industrially, there was less necessity for the employment of women and children.¹

¹ The Department of Labor and Printing for the State of North Carolina, in its report for 1907, gave the figures showing approximately that sixty per cent. of the employees in this mill were females. The same report for 1910 showed that the employment of females in the mill had decreased to forty-seven per cent.

It was a common sight to see the doffer-boys gathered outside the mill between doffs, and on one occasion, passing the mill with someone, I called attention to the superintendent leaning up against a bale of cotton, with the boys climbing around on other bales near him.

"Yes," said my companion, "and yet you read about these children being overworked. Why, I have seen them out there in watermelon season with the Superintendent slicing up a big watermelon between them."

The least that any one of these boys was paid was forty cents a day, and that in a country where the daily wage of a laborer on the farm is only fifty cents. I frequently watched the boys at their work in the mill, and they went at their work with a decree of alacrity that was more like play than anything else. I heard a new boy after his first day's work refer to the work as fun.

The girl spinners were paid, as in all cotton-mills, by the number of sides attended, and they always appeared to have ample time to stroll about or sit down when they wished to. I remember distinctly one little girl on one occasion, who left her frames spinning merrily away while she showed a boy visitor through the spinning department. She left her frames fully twenty minutes.

With regard to these young people being deprived of an education, I need only point to their parents as illustrative of the education they would get were it not for the cotton-mill. Very few of their parents had ever gone to school, as they expressed it, "to amount to anything," yet while they were illiterate they did not lack in intelligence. Even at Marshall there was no free school. I remember one boy going daily to the nearest public school, a distance over the mountains of two miles, and his mother told me cheerfully that he would not be able to do this were it not for the earnings of his elder sisters in the cotton-mill.

The mill made no pretense of carrying on any welfare work like the big mills of the South, yet, I repeat, it had done more

for Marshall and the county of Madison in its four years of existence than all the mission schools had done in their history. It was not paying dividends to its stockholders at the time of my investigation, but it certainly was paying dividends to humanity. It was feeding hungry families more than their "bread and meat." It was giving them who scarcely had clothing sufficient to protect them from the cold, who had lacked



DOFFER BOYS WHO EARN AS MUCH AS SCHOOL TEACHERS

Reproduced from one of the National Child Labor Committee's publications in which they deplore child labor. Note the bright intelligent faces, even to their hair being combed, as compared with the picture of the three loafers shown on page 79, represented by the same organization as "adult operatives."

medical attendance when ill, and who in their isolation had been growing up in ignorance and lawlessness something besides homilies and panegyrics. It was giving them a chance to improve on themselves and their parent stock. It was giving them a chance to improve their material welfare. It had already opened up to many of them the broad avenues of progress along lines of work and industry, and I doubt if there was a single one of those child doffers and spinners who had

commenced in that cotton-mill when its wheels first began going around, who could not go down into some one of the big cotton-mills of the South and earn more money than the school-teachers and preachers who so sadly deplore child labor with all the evils that are conjured up by it.¹

And in like ratio as the cotton-mill had educated and improved those people whom it had called down from their mountain homes, so had the straggling old county-seat been improved by it. The earnings of the women and children in the mill enabled them to buy goods from the merchants, the merchants bought from the farmers, and the farmers got better prices for what they had to sell. Fathers who had rarely found work around their cabin homes at fifty cents a day, now got from a dollar to a dollar and a half with work all the time they wanted it. They had the money to pay their taxes without any necessity for the tax collector seizing their cow, and they had something upon which to pay the tax as well.

If I were a Carnegie or a Rockefeller seeking to improve the conditions of our poor mountain people, I would build them a cotton-mill. I would gather their children in just as soon as they are big enough to doff and spin, and instead of feeding them on homilies and panegyrics, I would pay them a stipend that would buy them more than "bread and meat." I would teach them with real money what money brings, and while my cotton-mill might not pay dividends in dollars and cents, it would at least turn out workers capable of making a living for themselves when grown.

In conclusion, I may add that, although the mill at Marshall was a small one, the town was small and the county poor, it paid a total tax, for the year covered by my investigation, of five hundred seventeen dollars and seventy-six cents, of which one hundred eighteen dollars and forty-eight cents was for public

¹ The average district school teacher's salary, as reported by the State Superintendent of Public Instruction, was \$118.09 for an average term of 85.6 days. Accordingly the average school teacher's pay was \$1.38 a day with employment less than one-third of the year. Doffer boys were found earning in some of the mills farther South \$1.00 a day with employment all the time, and weavers easily earned \$1.50 a day.

education. Three hundred ninety-nine dollars and twenty cents of the amount was for the county, one hundred thirty-eight dollars and twenty-three cents for the State, and twenty-six dollars and thirty-three cents for the pensions of Confederate soldiers.

In reviewing these figures I am constrained to wonder how many cows such as the fat man told about as being seized by the tax-collector, while the poor man's little children stood around crying for her milk, would it take to pay into the county treasury, and into the State, a like amount.



THE LITTLE MILL DOWN ON THE RIVER .

That made Marshall grow and changed its chief industry from trying alleged moonshiners and murderers, to work and enterprise along true lines of advancement and progress. The building on the left is a flour-mill. The cotton-mill is the one on the right.

CHAPTER XIII.

VIEWS FROM DIFFERENT ANGLES.

My stay at Marshall was much longer than anticipated. The season proved very unpropitious for pursuing my investigations in the rural districts. Storms prevailed and winds blew most erratically, while the thawing of the frozen roads rendered traveling over them actually dangerous. However, my time was profitably spent with the people, learning from them many things of interest bearing upon the investigation, for it was not only admitted that in all probability, more convicts had been sent to prison-pens from that part of the country than any other, but in recent years it had been one of the chief sources of labor supply for the Southern cotton-mills.

Despite the bad roads, I made several excursions into the country, with pleasant comradeship, over the main highways between the mountains and hills, and through valleys where there were good farms. I was shown substantial houses, and from the back of my horse, with few exceptions, I could see nothing that would lead me to believe that the country people were not as true and worthy, and as prosperous, as the class of small farmers I am acquainted with in my own part of the country. In fact, it seemed to me that their mode of life in many respects was very similar to that of those I had known in my earlier days in New England, particularly in that their tables were well supplied with produce from their own farms; that they were sharp on a trade, especially a horse trade, and that they were eminently practical and possessed of a keen sense of humor. It rarely ever seemed to occur to them to lock their doors, and boasts were made that corn-cribs and

smoke-houses were never locked. Retributive justice was so sternly carried out in case of robbery, it was said, a man had once been sent to the chaingang six months for stealing a dozen ears of corn.¹

The people generally I found good-natured, but their sense of caution was apparent until inspired by a feeling of friendliness and confidence. That they were bold when stirred to action, was evidenced in the many personal conflicts of a serious nature attributed to them. They were very sensitive and easily aroused. Such language as I have heard used towards each other in certain sections of New England, would not be tolerated by them. Particularly sensitive were they on the point of being treated by writers as different from other people, or that certain conditions represented as prevailing among them tended to hold them up to scorn and ridicule. That missionary work among them was necessary, was frequently taken as an affront, and such puerile statements that there was need for such because there were those who had never seen a banana or a plate of ice-cream, and that many of them were unfamiliar with railroads and unconcerned about trusts, were pointed out as something akin to imbecility on the part of the writers who made them.

Perhaps I could better understand their just ground for complaint, for I can remember the first banana that was brought into my own New England home. I do not remember that we had any ice-cream in those days either, and I am sure that our sturdy race of old New Englanders, was none the worse off for all that. On the other hand, I do know that we had some very poor and ignorant people among us, and that while they did not understand the art of making blockade whiskey, they knew how to make cider, they got very drunk too, and often on something much stronger than cider.

While most of the articles referred to were written and published for the specific purpose of raising money to carry on

¹ Burglary is a capital offense in North Carolina, and previous to the civil war thieves were branded with a hot iron.

missionary work in the mountains, my attention was called to the fact that collections were being solicited continually in the mountains for missionary work elsewhere. I remember on one occasion a "tag-day" when the young people and ladies of Marshall turned out in force, selling little tags for the purpose of sending money to foreign missionaries teaching the heathen Chinese.

In connection with the representations and misrepre-



"IN THE GOOD OLD SUMMER TIME"

A type of mountaineer's cabin near Marshall showing how his corn grows. No garden; no hen-house or out-house of any description.

sentations concerning conditions in the mountains, a young lady school-teacher, returning from church one evening with a party of friends, addressing me in the hotel parlor, said,

"You people come down here, and because you see a little old cabin stuck somewhere, and a bunch of dirty ragged children, you take their pictures and go back and write about them as though we all were like that. Why don't you tell about the good things and people you see in the mountains?"

I hardly knew what answer to make, when one of my lawyer friends came to my assistance.

"There is no use denying it," said he, "we have some pretty rough and ignorant people in these mountains of ours, and the conditions among them are bad. It should be up to ourselves to try to improve them, and we can't do it by hiding them, or by simply denying their existence, as we are in the habit of doing. I believe that our missionary work should commence at home, and not be left for others."

Another example of the mountaineers' sensitiveness respecting what is written about them, was subsequently given me by an Episcopalian clergyman in another part of the country. An article written by a lady, who had been his guest, had found its way back to the mountains, and was printed in a local paper. It excited the ire of those who read it, and a delegation was appointed to call upon the clergyman in protest. The clipping from the newspaper was handed him, with sundry comments upon its appearance.

"What is the matter with it?" inquired the clergyman as he scanned it.

"Why!" exclaimed the spokesman for the protesting delegation, "She says there that we never saw a lemon! That's a lie right there! I can take you down the steet and show you a whole box of lemons."

"That's so," said the clergyman, and as he continued looking over the clipping he finally said,

"Yes, I see. This good woman, no doubt, though she was writing the truth, but she has fallen into a number of errors. Here she says that the mountain people are so honest, no farmer thinks of locking his crib or smoke-house. You know that this is not so. You know that you do not lock your cribs and smoke-house because no one dares steal. You would shoot the first low-down rascal caught lurking around your place if they did steal, and that is why you do not have to lock your cribs and smoke-houses.

The delegation agreed with him and went away satisfied.

During my stay at Marshall, ex-senator Pritchard, now a judge of the Federal Court, made a speech in one of the churches, pleading for prohibition. The Judge is a native of Madison County, and a former resident of Marshall. In pleading for prohibition, he told of conditions in some of the mountain localities, the equal of which I have not seen published in any of the writings of which the people concerned so frequently complain. Not one word of protest, however, was raised against any of the statements he made. On the contrary, they met with outbursts of laughter in some instances, and applause in others, yet I doubt whether anyone but a mountaineer would have dared to make the allegations Judge Pritchard made. One thing is quite certain, and that is, it would have been next to impossible for anyone but a mountaineer to have handled the subject matter as he did. The stranger's view-point is so entirely different from that of the people themselves, that in presenting the same facts, his manner of presenting them would make them appear false and slanderous, even though he tried to mollify them as writers usually do, by taxing his imagination in order to say something laudatory.

With respect to my seeking information, the desire to ignore, and even deny the existence of conditions that would tend to reflect upon the people themselves, was constantly in evidence. That there were two classes of people,—a low, trifling, shiftless class, and a sturdy, upright, thrifty class, was evident, but between these two classes there was not that marked distinction that exists between the old aristocratic families of the South and the "poor whites." As a matter of fact, the term "poor white" or "mountain white" is an expression foreign to the mountaineer. They are all a free and independent people. There is no class distinction. But the man or family who does not work and secure his share of the world's goods, is referred to as "no account." He may be a near relative of the thrifty farmer, or the thrifty farmer may have come up from one of the poor families.



CHILDREN IN MADISON COUNTY

As many of them are before they get the advantages presented by the cotton-mill. They did not know their father's name and when asked what it was, the eldest girl replied, "Papsy! Thet's what we call him." The gloom of their cabin is presented by the background. The baby is examining a piece of candy given her. She doesn't know what it is.

As the object of my investigation was to study the conditions of those people who have in recent years supplied the cotton-mills with labor, the thrifty farmer, merchant, lawyer or politician, were practically eliminated from my study, for it is not from such that the cotton-mills are supplied. My studies concerned the intermediate and worst conditions, with the view of ascertaining to what extent these conditions existed, and the influence upon them of the migrations and emigrations to the cotton-mills.

As far as my personal convictions were concerned, my investigations might have ended at Marshall. I found, however, that my conclusions were continually coming into conflict with those of good ministers, educators, and social workers, who persisted in their belief that their methods of education were the right solution of the conditions existing among the very poor. They would point to the comparatively few examples presented by those who had worked their way up out of poverty getting their education the best way they could, as showing the necessity of foisting education, according to their approved methods, upon all others. While they did not ignore the poverty which afflicted some of the very poor to the extent that it did; that they did not have enough food to properly nourish them, and clothing to keep them warm, yet in their written and printed articles and pamphlets pleading for money to carry on their educational work, they ignored the fact that the children of these people were hungry, and a piece of bread was of more importance to them than all the schools and school-books in Christendom. Their remedy for this poverty was merely the alphabet.

On the other hand, when I would express my opinion respecting the opportunities for self-improvement presented by the employment of the very poor in the cotton-mills, as I had found them, the professional educators and social workers would immediately jump from the deplorable conditions existing among the very poor to the good conditions existing among

the well-to-do classes, which were not concerned with the cotton-mill problem at all.

"The Academy" at Marshall may be taken as an example of the educational work referred to. Without doubt this "Academy" was doing good work along educational lines for those who could afford to send their children to it. But the fact that there existed in and around Marshall another class, who could not afford to send their children, or who when sent, were looked down upon by the other children, was completely ignored, or else the families and children were blamed for the circumstances under which they were born.

I feel safe in saying that within the ten or twelve years of its existence, the "Academy" had not brought within its sphere of influence a single family from the surrounding mountains, such as some of those I have described as brought under the influence of the cotton-mill. Yet upon the establishment of the cotton-mill at Marshall, fully three hundred of these people, unreached by the school, flocked to the cotton-mill. As they earned their bread and meat at the cotton-mill, and developed and grew, many of them left the mill and went to school.

An example of the failure of the mountain mission schools to reach the very poor and lowly, was presented to me right in Marshall. The example was brought to my attention by the visit of the Superintendent of the State Rescue Home, who had been called upon to take away several children from a family within a stone's throw of the court-house. The family consisted of a decrepit old man drawing a Federal pension of ten dollars a month, his daughter, and her seven illegitimate children. Their only visible means of support was the ten-dollar a month pension. The old father could not work if he would. There was no job for him. The mother's attention was evidently required to take care of the seven children; and unless some of those children were allowed to work, the alternative was the Rescue Home or starvation. They were out of the zone of influence of the cotton-mill, if for no other reason

than that women known to be of the character of the mother, would not be acceptable as members of the cotton-mill community. The result in this instance, with starvation staring the poor children of the unfortunate mother in the face, was the removal to the Home of three of them who were best qualified physically and mentally to do enough work to support themselves. The mother was required to sign an agreement with her mark, for she could not write, to give up all



TYPE OF MILL COTTAGE NEAR MARSHALL

hope of ever seeing her children again, which is one of the invariable rules of the association. Yet, if the children prove mentally or physically unfit,—incompetent to earn their bread and meat and clothing from the strangers to whom they are bound out, they are returned to the parent.

An example of this was presented by a little pipe-stemmed-legged urchin whom I saw almost daily on the street. His father was an old man from the neighboring mountains, decrepit but intelligent. He could read his Bible, quote scripture,

and explain it with interesting lucidity. He was willing to work, for I heard him apply at the cotton-mill office for a job. He was refused, either because there was no place for him, or they did not want him around. I subsequently met him on the street several times, with a little basket of bananas, trying to eke out an existence by selling them. With his little pipe-stemmed legged boy, a pitiful sight to look upon, he slept wherever he could find a place to mix up his ration of corn-meal with cold water and bake it, to be eaten with his slice of salt pork. The boy cursed and swore upon the slightest provocation, and even without provocation. The father, realizing that he could not give this child proper care, tried to get him into a number of charitable institutions until finally one consented to take him. After a short absence the boy was returned. He was found physically and mentally unfit. No one would have him, because of the care he required, and the prospect that he would never do enough work for his board. Yet the industries, which sometimes give to such as these work that is much lighter than the work required of them on farms, where they are usually bound out, are discouraged. Legislation is urged closing those avenues that open to them in many instances the means, not only of supporting themselves, but of forging their way to good citizenship, and even to places of wealth and honor among their fellow citizens.

While the rescue homes, supported entirely by voluntary contributions, form a very valuable alternative for many of the poor children in destitute circumstances, many are turned away that the homes cannot take or do not want. The Superintendent of the Rescue Home for the State of Virginia, at Richmond, told me that in a circuit of one week in the Virginia mountains, he had gathered up out of almshouses, destitute and immoral homes, eighteen children, and that a Judge in Richmond had become very angry with him and his institution or work, because he had refused to take children who were feeble-minded.

“But,” said he, “what are we to do? Our work consists

of simply finding homes for these children, and no one is going to take a child that is mentally or physically unsound."

An evangelist familiar with conditions in North Carolina, having traveled pretty much all over the mountains, preaching the doctrines of Christ in the remote homes of the very poor, gave me the following statement :

"While traveling in these remote districts often has my heart been moved in deepest sympathy for homeless orphans and for poor abandoned children whose condition is worse perhaps than that of the orphan. I found on one occasion, a homeless little boy who had been spending his nights in a stable, using a bunch of hay for a bed ; also a little girl whose bed was a pile of straw where a vagabond mother had placed her. Effort after effort was made to secure places for these unfortunate ones in some of the orphanages in the State, but satisfactory reasons were given why they could not be admitted. Occasionally such children were placed in good Christian homes, and immediately a dozen more would make piteous appeals for like help.

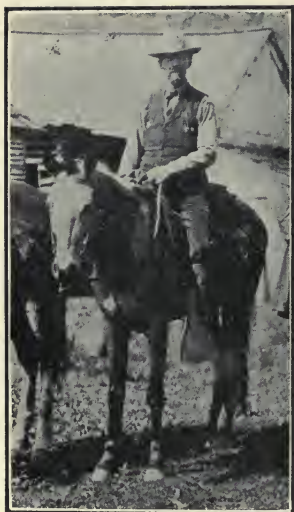
"Many children are kept from school because their parents are not able to purchase the necessary books, which sometimes cost not more than ten to fifty cents. This may seem incredible, but it is a true statement, for numbers of families in these remote districts do not handle as much as ten dollars in cash during an entire year. What they cannot make at home they get by barter. I have visited many homes in which none of the inmates could read, and the Bible was not there, because they could not read. Many of the public schools in the most remote districts are of little force, due in a great measure to incompetent teachers, worthless, uncomfortable buildings, and short sessions of two to four months. Many of the cabins have only one room, in size about 16x18 feet; and this is used as kitchen, parlor, bed-room, store-room, etc. In such homes large families are reared ; frequently I have seen from six to ten children in them. The women have to endure many hardships ; they do the cooking, the washing, make the clothing, and then share equally with the men the work in the fields, making and gathering the crops. The scores of children born out of wedlock, the long dockets at our criminal courts, and the clanks of the convict's chain testify in undeniable terms against us. A few years since a visit in the northern part of Haywood county revealed the fact that there had not been a school of any kind taught within the bounds of a certain school-district for two years."

The minister who made this report, who had seen and learned these conditions for himself, frankly admitted to me

that he had long become convinced that the cotton-mill with its child labor was a veritable God-send to the poor people of the mountains, who found their way to them. It seemed to me that I might have accepted this good man's testimony; but my instructions were to go and investigate the conditions myself, and I was most anxious to do so. There were too many conflicting opinions for me to choose between the two, and while my investigations at the mills were sufficient to settle the matter in my own mind, I was well aware that I could not discuss all the pros and cons of the topic to which I was assigned without personally familiarizing myself with all the conditions.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE HOMES OF THE MOUNTAINEERS.



Starting Out

At last all arrangements were made for my long anticipated journey. One of my lawyer friends spent the evening in his dingy little office mapping out a route over the hills beyond the town, into a country known from time immemorial for its peculiar lawlessness, which he thought would present to me some most interesting phases of life, and which would have a pertinent bearing upon the subject of my investigation.

The morning dawned with a drizzling rain, but I saddled my one-eyed, raw-boned Rosinante, the only horse I had been able to secure for the trip, and with saddle-bags stuffed with a few necessary articles, and a borrowed rain-coat, I departed in a drizzling rain because I never like postponing a journey after having once decided upon it. A few of my friends gathered to see me off, and one of them called out by way of farewell, as I started my Rosinante up the street,

“Look out that the moonshiners don’t take you for a revenue, and get you.”

The street merged into a winding road over the hills, and as I climbed upward I soon felt the freedom of the mountain air.

I urged my Rosinante into a gallop, and as we descended by a long sweep of the road, we sped through a country studded with farms and farm-houses, grassy pastures and ploughed fields—a country, indeed, that would compare favorably with many parts of New England.

I laid my course up a wide creek which became straighter and narrower, as up we went, the farms smaller and scantier, and the houses plainer and poorer in general appearance. The aspect of the country likewise changed as we proceeded. A



TYPE OF OLD-FASHIONED FARM-HOUSE NEAR MARSHALL

great mountain range loomed up ahead of me, and as the road swung off to the right prior to climbing it, I discovered another, but narrower road to my left. I paused in doubt. Two young women coming towards me paused, apparently in doubt also. They were bare-headed, disheveled, and clad in thin calico gowns. I called to them to know whether I was on the right road. Their reply was unintelligible as they waddled out of my way across a field of briers and stubble.

The narrowing creek was on my left, and my course was due north over the mountain in front of me, so I kept on. I

had no fear of getting lost, as any trail would serve my purpose. Wherever I went I should find the homes of the people. All that was necessary was to follow the creeks up the mountains and down again. The trail I chose, which happened to be the one desired, took me on a steady climb up the mountain side, where dingy cabin after cabin presented itself to my view. They even appeared in places so steep, it seemed a marvel almost, that they did not topple over and tumble down the mountain side. I passed one that was close to the road, with rocks and trees all around, and a group of thinly-clad, tangled-haired children staring at me wonderingly. Beyond I encountered more of the same sort,—cabins and children, and occasionally a slothful, indolent mother sitting listlessly by on a half-rotten porch.

I looked in vain for the tillable fields that gave these human beings support; for a barn, a cow-yard or a stable, but not an outhouse, not a building of any kind, nor even a chicken-coop, greeted my view. From some of the rotting logs of which the cabins were made, the chinking of mud had tumbled out and I could see the daylight clear through them. As for windows, it hardly occurred to me that any were needed. And these were the homes, "the farms," that our mountain people "with their splendid physical inheritance" sometimes left for the cotton-mills. I could understand it now. I could understand why those poor children and young girls at the mills did not wish to go back to any such farms as these.

My old Rosinante labored up the mountain as the ascent grew steeper, and with a final effort crossed the divide, where I paused to look out upon the grand scene that greeted my view. Spread out below me and beyond was a vast region of hills and dales and forests extending to the summit of the Great Smoky Mountains that hemmed in the country like a world unto itself. The rays of a mid-day sun, bursting beyond banks of scurrying clouds like a great curtain rolling up overhead, added increasing charm to the scene. I was looking down upon a section of country notorious for

illicit whiskey-making, fights, lawlessness, and the taking of human life.

My road now clung to the mountain on one side as it sheered away from a deep rocky ravine on the other, down which another creek was finding its way. That creek would eventually reach the sea, and so would I if I followed it far enough. Far across the ravine, in a cleared field surrounded by timber, I discerned a little toy-like house. It was made by nailing upright boards to a frame, putting a roof over it, and making a chimney on the outside by laying up stones and cementing them with mud or clay. A faint blue column of smoke ascended heavenward, and I wondered what the inhabitants were doing there.

Suddenly in front of me appeared a man and a boy, a horse and a plough. The horse was very old and poor, as poor and old as the man himself. The man was small of stature, wrinkled and mummy-like. The boy's legs appeared to have outstripped the boy himself in growing, leaving his trousers within a few inches of his shoe-tops displaying bright green stockings of thick home-spun wool. The bright green was rendered the more conspicuous by the absence of color anywhere else in all that bleak landscape.

The man wore a coat of many pieces, if not of many colors. The pieces were patched and quilted somewhat after the fashion of a bedquilt. The man eyed me curiously, his mummy-like smile increasing as I plied him with what to him were foolish questions, such as why was he going to plough at the top of the mountain for a piece of corn, when the land down in the valley below was so much better. To my inquiry relative to "blockading" in those parts, he shook his head rather dolefully, as he replied that the "revenues" got after the "blockaders so closely now days," they did not do much, and, besides, there was no corn.

As I neared the foot of the mountain the general appearance of the cabins improved, and fields gave place to some of the little pockets of tillable land I passed on the mountain side, and farm-houses took the places of cabins again. I

passed a church with a mule, and a horse or two hitched outside while a preacher within was shouting loud enough to be heard a mile.

A little after the noon hour I came to the country store and post-office, to which my lawyer friend had recommended me. Across the road opposite the store was a good-sized frame house with a steep hill rising behind it, and on a hill back of



GENERAL APPEARANCE OF THE CABINS IMPROVED

This family consisting of mother, daughter and four grandchildren, slicked themselves up for the photograph. The old lady said, however, that they had nothing to eat except meal and milk from one cow.

the store was a church and school-house, while on another hill a little beyond was the clergyman's manse and teacher's cottage, all belonging to the Presbyterian Board of Home Missions.

As I rode up to the store a very small man, seemingly old, came out and greeted me. I asked him his name and I told him mine, and that I had been recommended to stop with him.

"Git right down," said he, "and I will have the boy take your horse," and as the horse was led away, he invited me into the store. A counter extended around three sides of it with

ranges of shelves behind containing an assortment of all sorts of things, from drugs and patent medicines to canned peaches, knitting needles and hammers. A little corner near the door was partitioned off for the post-office.

Several men were lounging around. I greeted them pleasantly, and while they replied to my greeting, they regarded me curiously if not cautiously. They were gaunt-looking, stoop-shouldered, and I looked around in vain for the big brawny mountaineer whom we usually associate with the mountains.

They were evidently as interested in me as I was in them, but scarcely had I taken in a complete view of my surroundings when the little old fellow who had first greeted me, popping in at the door and rubbing his hands cheerfully, announced that they had "fixed up a snack" for me over at the house. I followed him as he indicated to the house where he presented me to his wife. I was ushered into a dining-room ceiled with plain boards, cheerless and unadorned, except for the cheer extended to me by the old couple themselves. I sat down to a dinner of steaming hot biscuits, fried salt pork, fried potatoes and fried eggs, and six varieties of preserved fruits and jams, enough to feed a corporal's guard at least. With all this abundance set before me, I was to learn that within that immediate neighborhood there were families who rarely had so much as a biscuit, and whose diet consisted almost exclusively of corn-meal and fat pork.

While I ate I improved the time by plying my hosts with questions pertinent to my investigation. The old man exhibited with pride a photograph of his family,—which consisted of himself, his wife, and twelve children—taken by the missionaries as an exhibit, showing the fecundity of the mountain families. The family proved to be a fair example of those reached by the mountain mission schools. The father was thrifty. He had worked hard, had saved all his life, and as a result was an extensive landowner, and owned about everything in the neighborhood. In religion he was a Baptist, but when the Presbyterians came with their church and school,

he received them joyfully, for the simple reason that they furnished him an easy and economical means for the education of his dozen children. Now that his children were educated and gone, the school was without scholars, and the church without a congregation. This was the true state of affairs there as I learned them.

My host told me frankly that there was very little work to be had on the farms, that labor brought only fifty cents a day, and there was little work to be had even at that, while on the other hand all those who had left that locality for the mills had reported life much better and easier at the mills. The poor families on the farms, he said, lived chiefly by raising a little corn on the mountains or wherever they could find an available place to grow it, and as they did not own the land it was customary for them to pay half their crop for the use of it.

Later I called upon the minister. A knock at the door of the Presbyterian manse on the hill, was answered by him. He at once invited me into his study, but upon being informed of my mission he seemed to answer my questions guardedly, if not with reticence. He was from New York and had been carrying on the mission and educational work in that locality for several years. It was palpably evident, as much as he evaded saying so, that he was decidedly discouraged with the results. I had anticipated his saying something of a condemnatory nature with respect to the families leaving the mountains for the cotton-mills, but he hardly expressed an opinion on the matter further than to say that he did not like to see them leave their mountain homes. Several families had gone from the immediate locality to the mills, he said, and he regretted very much the removal of one family in particular, for the reason that one of their children was in his school. He was aware, however, that those who had gone reported much better conditions of life at the mills.

With respect to his school work, he complained almost bitterly of the impossibility of getting the children to attend



MARRIED AT THIRTEEN

At fourteen she was a grass widow. She attended the mountain mission school, and as a result she could read and write and was more careful in her dress and general appearance. She considered herself better than her father and sisters who hoed and planted corn.

school. Upon the opening of the term they would come flocking in, with some degree of enthusiasm, but would gradually drop off until the attendance would be so small that it was hardly worth while keeping the school open.

He said the majority of the people were very poor; that they lived in one-room cabins with a lean-to, or in the style of house made of upright boards nailed to a frame, called a box-house; that they owned little or nothing, and moved about a great deal, giving as their excuse for doing so a desire to find land on which they could make a crop. He estimated that two-thirds of the people in the locality belonged to this class. Many of them had insufficient clothing, and he said he had seen them thinly clad in winter with the thermometer registering ten degrees below zero, plodding along through the snow as they termed it "shoe-mouth deep." This was frequently the cause of pneumonia, which usually proved fatal. When ill they rarely received any medical attendance beyond their own crude methods, or that of a native practitioner who pretended to have some knowledge of medicine. One of these self-instructed mountain doctors declared he had successfully assisted at eight births in one night.

While the food of these poor people consisted only of corn-meal mixed with water and baked in the fireplace, a little fat pork and coffee, they consumed great quantities of tobacco and snuff, beginning to use it at a very early age. As to their morals, he was noncommittal, but he deplored their early marriages, citing one case of a girl thirteen marrying an ignorant young lout who had nothing at all, not even a cabin to shelter himself and wife, or anything to begin housekeeping with. After their marriage they wandered about from place to place, seeking subsistence the best way they could, leading a vagabond life. Recently this couple had wandered back to the immediate neighborhood, looking veritably physical wrecks.

Superficially I saw nothing leading me to believe that the reputation the people generally bore in this section of the country for whiskey-making, lawlessness and murder was well

founded, nor by asking direct questions could I find that it was. My lawyer friend at Marshall, in referring to the locality and the people, had said:

"The killing there is not as bad as it used to be. The worst of them have been pretty much killed off."

Yet I had recently read in one of the little county papers at Marshall, that Sophroney Somebody, in a fit of jealous rage, had descended upon the cabin in which lived her rival Para-



"HER FATHER AND SISTERS, WHO HOED AND PLANTED CORN"

The father was almost a cripple from varicose veins.

sada, and had perforated the door with many little holes, some of which had extended into Parasada's breast as she held the door tight, whereupon Parasada set up such an outcry that Sophroney, believing she had surely killed her rival, fled in dismay farther away into the mountains.

I whiled away several interesting hours in the store satisfying the curiosity of the loungers by telling them the things I thought would interest them, and they in turn told me some of the things that I was interested in. I had seen the

outside world that they wanted to know about. They knew things and conditions of which I knew absolutely or almost nothing. Thus we made a mutual exchange. I found them while illiterate, intelligent and willing, after I gained their confidence, to tell me all I wanted to know about.

An old appearing, loose-jointed man with iron-gray whiskers did most of the talking for the group. I was surprised at the extent of his knowledge and to learn how well he was informed on our national affairs. From all written and printed accounts I had expected to find a set of people who, while "possessing a splendid physical inheritance," were densely ignorant, the one requisite for their salvation being education. But my findings were proving something just the reverse to be the case. Physically they were small, light in weight and even mummified in appearance. Those who had accumulated any property declared frankly that they had worn themselves out with hard work, and men appearing to be old proved to be no older than I. On the other hand, I found they were possessed of rare intelligence and wit, regardless of the fact that they had never had much if any schooling, while the knowledge of those who could read and write extended to an ability, with few exceptions, to write their names and read with difficulty the newspapers that occasionally found their way into their hands.

I left the place and its interesting company of reputed bad men with the descending sun close to the circling mountains on the west, and a four-mile ride before me. The road, winding around past little nooks, in each of which was ensconced a respectable-looking farm-house, led up over the hills and down into valleys again. I passed tracts of mountain land that seemed to have been cultivated for all that was in them. Dilapidated log tobacco-barns occasionally loomed upon their edges against the sky-line ominously, for this country had once produced paying crops of tobacco which had enabled the thrifty and industrious farmer to build himself a good home.

Twilight found me descending a long stretch of road, yellow

in the somber light like a loosely flowing ribbon. On my left I passed a large, two-story building, with a Masonic emblem on its facade, and on my right a small cross-roads store, closed and deserted. A cow lowed in the valley below, a dog barked, and children scurrying across the field hallooed. Where the road finally stretched out across a bit of plain, I reined up before a small frame house having a yard enclosed with rough palings. A stout, past middle-aged man, in the act of stepping



"ENSCONCED A RESPECTABLE LOOKING FARM-HOUSE"

This house belonged to the old-appearing, loose-jointed man who did most of the talking. He was one of the Franklins.

upon the porch, looked around and answered my inquiry whether I could be accommodated for the night—doubtfully, I thought.

"I don't know whether we take in stragglers or not," he said. And then, coming toward me with a labored gait, he settled the matter by adding, "You jest get off and let the boys put up your horse, and we'll see about it."

This evidently was a piece of his facetiousness, for, extending his hand in welcome, he said, "My name is Jemerson

Tweed, what might yours be?" And having settled this question he guided me through his yard into the house, as a rugged-looking young man, popping up from somewhere, led my horse away.

In the house he called loudly to a boy tilted in a chair against the wall, who proved to be deaf, to fetch some wood, and while the sticks were being thrown on the fire and the fire stirred up to make a greater blaze, he placed a chair for me to enjoy the cheer, taking another for himself, complaining of his rheumatism as he did so.

He was a veteran of the civil war, a staunch Republican, and proud of the fact that during those perilous times when his section of the country was raided, the people ambushed and killed by rebel details, as he described it, he had made his way over the mountains to the Union army, in which he remained to the end of the war.

I noted that his language was excellent; that if there was the slightest twang of dialect in his speech it was hardly perceptible, and to attempt to portray such little idiosyncrasies of speech as he sometimes lapsed into, would undoubtedly result in exaggerations. He appeared to be fully informed on current topics, and by way of comparison it seemed to me that he was as broad in his views and as erudite as any New England farmer whom I might meet on the farms in the East, and in many respects even more liberal. He had reared eleven children of his own, and had sent them off to school, excepting the one who was deaf, and two older ones who had settled down in homes of their own nearby. As he and his wife were lonely, the children whom they had sent off to be educated having left them, they had taken in two little girls belonging to a poor woman, he explained, who had never married. There were many such children in the country about, he said.

When supper was announced we took our chairs to the dining-room, where we sat down to a well-supplied table of

country fare presided over by his wife, a small, dark-haired woman. After supper we returned to the living-room, where we passed the evening in conversation by the cheering fire. As the children were prepared for bed in one of the two big beds in the room, my host lighted a lamp and conducted me to another room on the other side of the house, which he indicated was to be mine for the night. It was ceiled with yellow pine, and the walls were decorated with a lithographed portrait of President Roosevelt, another of Vice-President Fairbanks, a flaring three-sheet army poster such as are used for attracting recruits, a large map of the United States, two gilt-framed family portrait-enlargements, and various articles of wearing-apparel. A small parlor organ occupied one corner, a trunk with various articles of clothing folded up on it, another corner, while two beds took up nearly the whole of the floor-space not occupied by a center-table and two rocking-chairs. I give this inventory of the room concluding my notes for the day, for it is typical of all the other mountain houses of this class that I visited.

CHAPTER XV

AMONG THE CLANSMEN

A GLORIOUS sun, rising above the distant mountain, flooded the valley with its light, as I followed my host into the yard to perform my morning ablutions at the spout, where flowed a constant stream of cool water coming from the adjacent mountain. Good-natured and cheerful, he set the example of washing himself, and when I had finished, he conducted me to the breakfast table abundantly served with fried eggs, salt pork, corn pone, hot biscuit and preserved fruit. The striking difference between that breakfast and the breakfast of my younger days on the New England farm was the difference between the corn pone and the johnny cake I used to know. The johnny cake of New England was meal scalded with boiling water and baked on a griddle. When my father was a boy, it was baked in front of the fireplace on a board. The corn pone of the Southern mountains is meal mixed with cold water and baked in an oven. Among the very poor people it is called "chicken dough" owing to its resemblance to the dough on which chickens are fed.

After breakfast, I sat on the side porch with my host and his wife, in the glow of the morning sun, he whiling away an hour or two telling me many interesting incidents of his life and things I wanted to know about. Pertinent to my investigation was the information he gave me concerning the poor people as he knew them in his section of the country. He said they rarely owned any land. They usually tried to find a place on which they could make a crop of corn and when obtained, the owner exacted from them one-half of all the corn they

raised, for rent. The lot of these poor people, he thought, was growing harder each year. The landlord was becoming more exacting, the land poorer, scarcer and harder to get. If the tenant had a cow, he was charged for pasturage. After dividing his corn crop with the landlord, he rarely had enough left to carry himself and his family through the winter, and a large share of this was usually sold as soon as harvested to get shoes for his children, so that before winter was over, he was with-



"TRAIL DOWN THE MOUNTAIN TO THE NEAREST GRIST-MILL"

out corn. He was then obliged to buy it when it was worth a third more or even twice as much as he sold his for. To pay for it he got the money the best way he could, borrowing here and there, going into debt and working occasionally or promising to work.

Many of these poor people dwelt in places remote from the highways, where they lived in isolation and ignorance. As long as their corn held out, the father or some other member of the family would trail down the mountain with half a bushel or a bushel of it and have it ground at the nearest mill. Their

lives were monotonous to an extreme. They usually sat around their cabins during the winter, doing nothing until the spring set in when all hands would turn out to make a crop. Sometimes, after their crop was put in, a storm would wash it away, when they would have to plant it all over again. Then again, the season would be too late for replanting, and there would be an insufficient crop.

My host was well informed respecting the early settlement of the country. He said that the first settler in those parts was a famous hunter who came over the mountains in Tennessee from Virginia. He had a pack of dogs almost as famous as himself. As long as there was a bear anywhere in the country he was sure to get it. The name of this bear-hunter was Shelton. He made his last stand on one of three tributaries to the Laurel River which became the Shelton-Laurel, and which in turn gave its name to that entire section of country, notorious for its feuds, fights and killing scrapes.

The Sheltons were said to be a tall, hardy race from England, who preferred hunting and fighting, to settling down in one place, and pursuing the peaceful occupation of farming. The name may be traced down through the Virginia mountains into Kentucky and Tennessee, and it is said that wherever the Sheltons are found to this day, they are known for their fighting proclivities. On the upper Shelton-Laurel in the vicinity of where the original Shelton made his last stand, it is estimated that more than two-thirds of the families bear the name of Shelton.

Among other things my host discussed, were the political affairs of the county. He said that while the county voted the Republican ticket by a large majority, and he himself was a staunch Republican, the county officials at one time became so thoroughly intrenched in their offices, and pursued such high-handed measures as to "nearly bust the county wide open." I was at loss to know what the expression meant, but he explained by saying that the Sheriff, for example, upon being securely installed in his office, would say to his deputies,

"Now boys, this office is worth just as much as we can get out of it. Let's get to work."

The work consisted of collecting taxes, of prosecutions, arrests and imprisonments. The taxes were collected on a percentage basis, and usually bore most heavily upon those who had very little or nothing on which to pay. Prosecutions, arrests and imprisonments were on a fee basis, so that the greater the number of arrests, the more money the sheriff and his deputies would get, and of these they were not obliged to make an accounting to any one, so that it was never known how much the sheriff's office really paid. But everybody did know that besides being the most important man in the county, the sheriff was usually the most prosperous.

The taxes were very often assessed in a manner that was most oppressive, the individual's political affiliations not infrequently being a factor. It was notorious that the extensive landowner whose politics were known to be right, and who, perhaps, had a number of tenants who voted his way, very often got off with a very light assessment. Every one was taxed, however, it being a common saying that there were two things in life one could not escape, and they were death and taxation. Every able bodied man, between the age of twenty-one and forty-five, was required to pay two dollars poll-tax, besides another two-dollar road tax. The latter he could pay, however, by working on the road at fifty cents a day. Household furniture alone was exempt of taxation to the extent of twenty-five dollars, but many of the very poor hardly had five dollars' worth. Everything else was taxed, even to the money one had in his possession, and the curious anomaly existed of the same piece of property being taxed twice. For example, should one sell his land or farm, and take a mortgage on it, the mortgage he held was taxed, while the purchaser of the property was required to pay the tax on the purchased property regardless of the mortgage.

In order to increase their fees, county officials in many instances, deliberately instituted prosecutions, generally against

some poor devil who had neither means nor money for defending himself. A common charge was for carrying a gun or a pistol, a trivial violation of the law, which could be brought against almost anyone. A warrant would be made out for the accused party, and an officer sent to arrest him. The prisoner would be taken to the county-seat and locked up. It did not make much difference whether he was convicted or not. The Sheriff would get his fees for the arrest; the clerk would get his for the warrant, and the jailor his for every time he turned the key in the lock, to let the prisoner in or out, and he was also allowed pay for keeping him. Such abuses as these inspired little confidence in the law, which struck me as a very logical reason for the reputed lawlessness of the people in some instances, their resisting arrest in others, and threatening to shoot up the court-house in others, if they did not actually shoot it up.¹

I questioned my host on this point, but he did not seem to be inclined to discuss this matter. He referred me to one of the Sheltons, a neighboring farmer, who was one of the most enterprising and substantial citizens in the township, and who, he said, might give me further information.

I went down the road a piece to see the farmer, and I found him a pleasant-mannered, urbane young man, presenting an appearance not differing much from the intelligent citizen farmer to be found elsewhere, except that he looked less awkward and was more polished in manner than some of our New England farmers as I used to know them.

His house was a two-story frame structure, painted white, with brown trimmings. There was a large barn near by, with a cowyard, and cattle were browsing in the adjacent field. The owner greeted me pleasantly and with an unassumed frankness answered my questions, many of which I doubt whether I should have put to him had I known more about him.

I subsequently learned that he had killed two or three men

¹ The more recent raid upon the Hillsville Court-house in Carroll County, Va., in which the court was exterminated, six persons being killed, is an example of this.

himself. It was related that on one occasion, while visiting Greenville over the mountains in Tennessee, Andrew Johnson's old home, he had gone on the rampage with his companions. Upon the Sheriff's protesting at the disturbance which he was creating, he invited him outside the city limits, in true chivalrous fashion, to decide who was the best man. The Sheriff with a deputy or two, went after the belligerent North Carolinian, who upon finding himself pursued, dismounted with his comrades, and, with their horses standing across the road, fired across their saddles with such effect that the enemy fled in disordered retreat.

On another occasion, some of these same Shelton-Laurelites, becoming offended at the action of the officials at Hot Springs, for having locked up one of their men, I believe, sent a notice that they were going to shoot up the town. Thereupon the chief citizens of Hot Springs, with an equal degree of belligerency, armed themselves with whatever firearms they had at hand and with coolness and firmness, disdaining to entrench themselves, lined up along the railroad track awaiting the threatened attack. It came with hoots, pot shots and derisive yells and was answered with pistol, shot-gun and rifle-fire and rebel yells, for Hot Springs has the distinction of having been a rebel town during the war and votes the Democratic ticket still. The battle was decisive only in that the defenders along the railroad track did not yield their position, but the Shelton-Laurelites claimed a victory inasmuch as they had shot up the town after their fashion, which was all they had threatened to do.

Not long after I had left my interesting host with whom I had passed my first night in this part of the country, his two sons allowed an ill feeling that had been brewing between them and two neighbors' sons to culminate. No one seemed to know what was the cause of the trouble further than that there was a dance the Saturday night previous, and it was a matter of general knowledge that "the Franklins could not bat an eye without the Tweeds taking offence." On the Sun-

day afternoon following the dance, the two Tweed boys appeared at the store I had passed on the hill in front of the building with the Masonic emblem on it, where they found the two Franklins. A fight ensued in which both Franklins were killed. For this double tragedy the Tweeds received a prison sentence of six years. The father of one of the Franklins subsequently told me that it had cost him seven hundred dollars



A SHELTON-LAUREL FAMILY

The old man with the whiskers helped bury twenty-one killed in eight years.
The tallest fellow in the background was home on a visit.
He had been away to a cotton-mill.

in the prosecution of the Tweeds. Otherwise, they might not have been prosecuted at all or if prosecuted, probably they would have been acquitted.

In taking my leave of Mr. Tweed, I decided to continue up through that part of the country most notorious for its feuds and fights and killing scrapes. A traveling salesman told me how on one occasion, in selling goods at the same store at which the Franklin boys were killed, it was learned that he belonged to a family a member of which, his uncle, it was

alleged, had shot one of the Sheltons in one of their raids during the civil war, when they were driving off cattle on the other side of the mountain. He was surrounded by several men and boys and the situation looked very serious for him, but he kept his head and succeeded in pacifying the belligerents with a speech in which he told them that he had never seen their uncle or his uncle either, and had no more to do with his uncle killing their uncle than they had.

As I continued my journey I saw no indications that would lead me to believe that there could be a particle of danger to anyone desiring to visit this section. Still, a young man living at Hot Springs assured me that ten years before, a stranger would have been stopped and made to turn back. Once I met a kindly-featured old man with a long flowing beard. He came jogging towards me, guiding his horse with one hand and holding a long gun over his shoulder with the other. He nodded pleasantly to me as he passed, his blue eyes beaming with kindness and good feeling toward his fellow man. It did not seem credible that a section of the country producing such a gentle type of man as he appeared to be, should merit the name it bore.

From the home of the young farmer Shelton, whom I had interviewed, I followed a trail that led me winding up a mountain through a sterile-looking section, but evidently one that was densely populated. Wherever a nook appeared between hills or at the foot of them, there was a little oasis of green with its cabin. The cabins were built of great hewn logs, and tightly chinked, showing that those who had built them were a different kind of people from those abiding in the rotting-log, unchinked structures I had observed in coming over the mountain from Marshall. Farmer Shelton had also told me that the families in this settlement, known as the Cutshaws, poor as they appeared to be, always had money, as was shown "whenever they got into any difficulty with the law, for they were always able to pay their way out."

The winding trail up over the mountain spur, finally dropped

me down between mountains it seemed, upon the stream to which the old bear-hunter Shelton had given his name. It was a broad, shallow, pleasant murmuring stream, as clear as crystal, gently flowing over a bed strewn with smooth stones and pebbles, with a great boulder looming up here and there. Where the trail came down to it, there was a white school-house. Near by was the old Shelton burying-ground, in which



"RESTING FROM THEIR LABOR"

Lovey, the girl with the hoe, had been away to school. She said, if she ever got away again, she never would come back to hoe tobacco

a man subsequently told me he had assisted at the burial of twenty-one individuals in eight years, all of whom had been killed in fights or frolics of some kind or another, mostly the result of drinking moonshine whiskey. Among those killed was a woman, and a boy of fourteen.

Notwithstanding these violent deaths, I learned that the Sheltons were a prolific race, and that there was no danger of their extermination. It was said, however, that the Nortons, another family of pioneers from Virginia, contemporaneous

with the Sheltons, had nearly all been killed off. Those who were left had degenerated, it was said, until they were "not worth killing."

One of the Sheltons upon whom I called in the "Upper District," owned a good farm of two hundred acres, and lived in a nicely painted house, with barn and outhouses. He was the father of ten children living at home, while ten other children living with their mother in a cabin up the lane, were reputed to be his. However, the twenty children, two mothers and one father, were all Sheltons. I subsequently saw nearly all of them, with the mother of the illegitimate ones, in the field hoeing tobacco, and I got a photograph of some of them as they sat under the fence resting from their labor.

In another house in the middle of a field not far away, was another Shelton with eleven daughters, each of whom, excepting the youngest, was the mother of another little Shelton or two.

At another house at which I stopped farther on, a comely girl welcomed me. She said her name was Vicie and that she was a Shelton too. I asked her whether she was any kin to a Shelton of whom I had heard, who had lost six or seven brothers, all killed in fights.

"I don't know," she replied, poisoning her snuff-stick in an attitude of suspense, and then reflectively, "I had three brothers shot to death, and my mother was killed too."

"And what was done with those who did the killing?" I asked.

"Nuthin'! My mother was shot at a corn-huskin'. I saw her shot, but it was dark, an' we could not tell much about it. They said it was an accident. Esau Shelton, who killed one of my brothers, was shot right out there on Christmas day," and she pointed to a grassy spot near a pair of bars. "Wallace Ray killed him. They had been drinking, and Wallace got it into his head that Esau thought he was the better man, and he walked up to him and shot him dead."

Looking at my camera she asked me if I took photographs,

and what I charged. I told her that I did not charge anything, whereupon she said.

"Then you go about the country takin' folks' pictures fur nuthin'," and looking me straight in the eye, with as little concern as though she were referring to a pig or a chicken, she added, "If you were ter take my picture fur nuthin', I would kill you."



VICIE, HER CHILD AND NEIGHBOR'S CHILDREN
She divorced her husband because he was not the father of her child.

"Kill me?" I asked laughingly. "Oh, no! You might kill some other fellow, but me, never!"

She did not laugh at my pleasantry, but merely ejaculated a "Huh," and never cracked a smile.

As she dandled a little child on her knee, I asked her if that was her only one. She replied that she had two others whose father was a soldier in the Philippines. He had enlisted in the army because the "revenues" had gotten after him for making blockade whiskey. This last child was not her husband's, so she had divorced him, for "what is the use of

having a husband, if he has to run off and join the army," she said.

Curious to know something about the divorce, I asked her how she got it, and how much it cost.

"It was easy enough to get," she replied, "but it cost me nineteen dollars in money. I got it over in Tennessee."

"You are not lacking for children in this part of the country," I said, getting back to the fecundity of the Sheltons. "They say Uncle Dave Shelton had forty-one."

"Huh! He did not miss nary a notch on his stick, I reckon," she replied in a most matter-of-fact way. "There was Uncle Luke Shelton who had twenty-one all hissen, but he did not come anywhere near catchin' up to Uncle Dave, did he?"

However we may view these people, and may feel inclined to criticise them, I found them living without any cloak of hypocrisy. They were exceedingly kind in manner, hospitable and not lacking in intelligence. Vicie, who had divorced her husband because he had run off to the army, and wasn't the father of her child, prepared a dinner consisting of hot biscuit, jams and preserves and other things. She invited me to eat and served me with a quiet dignity that was charming although her natural urbane manner was marred somewhat by her use of the snuff-stick and an occasional remark about the taking of a human life as if it were no more than the swatting of a fly.

I gently took the snuff-box from her and showed her how Napoleon Bonaparte, George Washington and my own grandfather used the snuff by snuffing it, at which she marveled wondrously, saying that she had never seen or heard the like before and then she laughed. It was her only laugh. I told her she should not talk about killing folks because it was not nice and lady-like and she opened her great brown eyes looking into mine wonderingly. She took me to see the working of an odd contrivance for drawing water out of a hidden spring on the mountain-side half a thousand yards away,—and as I

watched her kind and gentle manner, I felt that there was no veneering of our much lauded civilization there. Like the oak that abounds in her forest, she was solid all the way through. How unlike the many expensively veneered creatures of our effete civilization, with all their advantages of wealth, culture and education. She presented that hardy type of our an-



A DECADENT FAMILY

cestral race that by its very rudeness and virility gave backbone to a nation.

Yet on the other hand, mingled with these people are those decadents, who from a lack of nourishment, bodily exercise and toil, have degenerated to a degree that hardly seems creditable. I found many such families whose only food was ground corn made into a crude loaf, and a little fat meat.

CHAPTER XVI.

THEY TOIL NOT, NEITHER DO THEY SPIN.

THE trail up the mountain was wild and desolate. Occasionally I passed a wretched cabin, or a shack of unmarketable boards from an abandoned saw-mill. God-forsaken in appearance, with no visible land for tillage, I wondered why human habitations were built in such places. But there were not many of them, and as I went farther up there were less, and finally none at all as I found myself traversing a more desolate region still. A spur of the range rose high above me on my right, while off to my left ran long, white, rock-faced cliffs towering above a deep, wooded ravine that lay between.

All around bore a primeval aspect as though it had changed little since the old bear hunter Shelton first crossed the divide. It seemed an ideal place for the moonshiner of whom I had heard so much outside of these mountains, but had failed to discover in reality. As I crossed the divide I was unable to discover any sign or monument marking the boundary-line of the two States, and it was not until I made sure that the little stream at my feet was flowing away from me that I knew for a certainty I was in Tennessee.

The trail now fairly plunged down the mountain, with the tiny stream becoming a small torrent plunging ahead of it. This was the beginning of a district known locally as Devil's Fork, taking its name from the stream. The State, however, designates the districts by number only, thus their more impressive and characteristic names are lost except to the inhabitants of their respective localities.

That I was entering a more densely populated region than

that part of the State I had just left, soon became evident. There were cabins, shacks and houses almost everywhere it seemed, that one could be placed. Even old tobacco-barns rotting away with neglect, were inhabited. Slattern-looking, idle women were sitting in doorways, with children, dirty and ragged like themselves, moping around. They were the women and children that toiled not, neither did they spin.

I looked for the children at play, who at the cotton-mills



NO HOPE FOR THESE

"Where they toil not, neither do they spin."

are represented as losing the word in their vocabulary. What a mockery of truth! Here they were without play, without proper food, and hungry all the time. It is this hunger, this craving something, they do not know what, that accounts for their chewing snuff and tobacco, and eating clay. Mothers give their babies snuff or tobacco to "stop their yellin'," they said. Its narcotic effects deadens the craving, but not always. As the babies grow they toddle to the chimneys and pick out the clay and eat it. Their bodies are actually

starved by the food that fails to supply the nourishment for growth and development of the human body and mind, and then comes the whiskey that makes them mad, and sometimes drives them to killing one another. As an example, there was an old man living in his lone cabin, with his cow occupying one part of it, near the top of the divide. He was the sole survivor of several brothers who had been killed in whiskey fights.

Yet with such conditions as these, our good religious workers, missionaries and educators, who know in a vague way that some such conditions exist, collect and spend thousands of dollars to build schools and academies, literally to feed these poor children upon the alphabet. Then they marvel because they do not get results.

When they see such children as these at the cotton-mills, how they deplore that industry that gives them something to do; that gives them an occupation and teaches them industrious habits, and above all puts them in the way of getting satisfying food that builds them up, and with the work and industry makes of them good men and women.

The inhabitants of this district differed from those of the Shelton-Laurel country in that they did not bear the fighting reputation the others bore. A revenue officer in describing those of Shelton-Laurel, said,

"They will meet you in the open, and fight you in the open, and shoot you with a smile. And if you are their friend they will fight for you too."

But the character of the people on the Tennessee side of the mountain was reputed to differ in many ways. They were a less thrifty and sturdy people, and were not known particularly for their fighting proclivities. Yet occasionally a fight occurred among them resulting in someone being killed. Their method was to creep upon their enemy and shoot him down, or lie in wait for him from behind some tree.

My route on leaving Marshall had been mapped out as far as the Shelton Laurel country. Thence my decision to cross the Great Smokies and descend the Devil's Fork was deter-

mined by my recollection of a family from that locality which I had seen at the cotton-mill. I had interviewed the eldest daughter in her little cottage home at the mill, seated at a sewing-machine that she was paying for with her own hand-work. Her father, and her brothers and sisters, who were old enough, were working in the mill. She was neatly dressed and clean, and her hair was combed. When I asked which she liked better, her mountain home or the mill, she shook her head sadly and said "the mill." I asked her whether she hoed corn or pulled fodder when she was on "the farm," and she shook her head in reply.

"I could do neither," she said.

Then she explained that her feet were deformed, and that was why she did not do any work on the farm, but she could run her machine, "and," said she, "I have all the work I can do."

I could well understand why she did not wish to return to "the farm" coming from such a place as Devil's Fork, but when I arrived near the foot of the mountain I saw a real farm. A fine piece of bottom land as level as a mill-pond spread out between the hills that surrounded it. There was a great barn, a farm-house at one end of it, and the owner made profitable crops, had money in the bank, and educated his children. He did not take them to any cotton-mill, any more than a New York banker takes his children to an East-side sweat-shop.

Presently I came to a scattering of houses in a basin-like cove. There was a church or two, and an elaborate school-building, with a teachers' cottage and manse belonging to the Presbyterian Board of Home Missions. Altogether the place resembled in some respects a New England village of half a century ago. I looked about for a place to stop. The sun was getting low. A man said to me,

"Are you a Presbyterian? If you are I reckon the preacher will keep you over night."

Following his directions I went to the preacher's house in

the midst of a field. As I rode up a young man full of vigor and vim came on the porch. He scarcely waited for me to introduce myself, but hurrying down from the porch, he bid me dismount, saying he would put up my horse. It was evident to him that I was a traveler in need of food and rest, and he asked no questions, but leading my horse to the stable, he gave him all the corn he thought he ought to have, with my approval, and then took me into the house where he presented me to a frail little woman, his wife.

She hastened to prepare supper, and incidentally I learned that she was obliged to do all her own work for the reason that no one of the mountain girls whom she and her husband were trying to educate, would take a job. When I explained to them that I was studying conditions in their mountains with the view of ascertaining the effect of factory employment on the women and children who went to the cotton-mills, they were plainly surprised, if not shocked. Didn't everybody know how the little children were stunted in body and mind at the mills, deprived of an education, and didn't even know how to play?

I asked them if they had seen a cotton-mill, and they confessed that they had not, but they had read all about them in the magazines. I could scarcely refrain from smiling. As I told them that I had seen the children at the mills, and that the conditions under which they lived and even had to work, were much better than what I had observed of their condition in the mountains, they became greatly interested. They were decidedly opposed to any emigration of the poor people from the mountains, insisting upon the point that they should be educated, but when I asked point-blank how many of the poor benighted children of those mountains they had succeeded in educating, I thought they exchanged significant glances. With the mention of one girl held up as a shining light of their concentrated educational work, I could get nothing further beyond the fact already indicated that the good woman could not get one of the mountain girls whom she, her husband

and a corps of teachers were trying to educate, to go into her house and help her with her work.

The young clergyman took such a lively interest in the problem I was sent to study that he laid his books and magazines aside, and began looking down and around, himself. After my return to Washington, he sent me an account of a family he had visited with one of his co-workers. The attention of his co-worker was called to a strange girl at Sunday school, who, apparently sixteen years old, appeared to be in a delicate state. Upon making inquiry respecting her appearance, the nonchalant statement was elicited from some of her neighbors, that she was "always that way." Her home was located, and the clergyman in company with his co-worker, rode over the mountain to it. Her family was found to consist of father, mother and eight children. The clergyman's account follows:

"The home is a one-room log house, fourteen by fifteen feet. All cooking is done in the fireplace. Floor of puncheons. Such filth and squalor I have scarcely seen equaled. All the family are the color of pipe-clay, and all the children have the protruding abdomen or pot-belly that is so characteristic of this type of degeneracy. We diagnosed the case as clay-eating, and asked the mother if it were not so. She acknowledged it with no more concern than if we had asked her about bread-eating. They eat anything in the clay line that comes along. Whether the mother does or not, I can't say, for she had unmistakable signs of pregnancy. The father is shiftless; earns no more than thirty or forty dollars a year. He raises, with the help of wife and children, a patch of corn, probably three acres, and the yield is about twenty-five bushels to the acre. He gives one-third as rent, so has about fifty bushels of corn to furnish meal, and also to use in barter for commodities. He raises a few razor-back hogs. Will probably steal, if put to it. He and his wife continue to bring on children, and this is race suicide infinitely worse than Theodore Roosevelt's. Their food is corn bread and coffee, meat of a low grade of pork when they can get it. Quantity small, quality low. Heavy consumers of home-grown, home-cured "hill-side navy" tobacco, and snuff. Sanitation nil. Filth, refuse, excrement around the doors. Two dirty beds for the whole family; no wonder morals are a minus quantity."

The presentation of this case has its value only in that it shows to what degree of degeneracy the human race may descend, due to environment, bad food, laziness, lack of incentive, and vice. Such a family as this would not be wanted at a cotton-mill, and as some such do sometimes get to a mill, if they remain at all, it usually costs the mill as much to get



"RACE SUICIDE INFINITELY WORSE THAN THEODORE ROOSEVELT'S"

"Yet these children appeared bright and might be saved at a cotton-mill."

them up in proper shape for work, as they can ever repay on the investment, from the corporation's standpoint.

A family to which the clergyman called my attention, however, and to which a cotton-mill would undoubtedly be a God-send, was one presided over by Christopher Columbus Wal-drop, or as he was generally known, "Buckeye Cuddey." To reach his home I had to follow a mere path up through the woods. In the midst of a thicket I came to a board shack

without windows or chimney. Tilted in a chair against the shack was a young, robust-looking man. In the open door against a background of darkness was a bright little girl. She had a mullen-leaf shaped into a hat, and decorated with wild flowers, which she was fitting on a younger sister's head. At seeing me she grabbed the mullen-leaf hat with one hand, and throwing her arm around her sister, disappeared within the gloom of the shack.

I asked the man what he was doing.

"Nuthin'," said he. And then he said he made baskets when he felt like it. But he didn't feel like it just then. Besides he had nothing to make baskets of, but his brother had gone for material.

"Then you have a brother?" said I.

"Yep! Two on 'em," said he. "'Tother one has gone aploughin' in the field up the road a piece."

"And to whom do the children belong?" I asked.

"Them's his kids—Buckee's, the one thet's gone aploughin'."

"Christopher Columbus Waldrop?" I queried.

"Yep! thet's 'im."

"And you all live here and make baskets?"

"Yep! Make baskets when we feel like et."

The man had been given a job that morning to hoe corn. He had hoed perhaps two hours at the end of which he threw down his hoe, left the field and sauntered up the trail through the woods to the shack where I found him. And so I said,

"I thought you had a job hoeing corn?"

"So I hed, but I reckon I hoed out," came the reply good-humoredly.

Entering the shack, I looked around in its gloom. There was the little girl still holding her baby sister in one arm, and grasping the mullen-leaf hat with her disengaged hand. She smiled at me while two grimy-faced little boys shrank farther away in the gloom. The light filtering through the cracks between the upright boards forming the sides of the shack, disclosed in one corner a filthy bed. A bright spot of sun-



THE HOME OF CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS WALDROP.

His two brothers and four children. They made baskets when they felt like it. Basket making does not create predatory wealth and there is no limit to get into the basket-maker's lungs and injure his health. It is the influence of such homes as this that the cotton-mills destroy.

light shining down the chimneyless fireplace, disclosed a small mound of cold ashes, a frying-pan and a tin coffee-pot. Two old splint-bottomed chairs completed the furniture of that home. Such a home as was referred to by a New York editor in refusing one of my articles because he did not want to see its influence destroyed by giving the children factory employment, he said.

There was not a particle of food in that home. Not even a table at which one could sit down to eat when there was any food. And there were those hungry children looking at me staringly, amazed. I asked the little girl her age, and she said she was just turning fourteen. I turned to her little brothers and held out a coin. They shrank farther away. Then the little sister admonished them, telling them not to be afraid. She bade the elder one take the coin. He finally mustered up sufficient courage to do her bidding, grabbing at it as though to make sure that he really got it.

I asked him if he knew how much it was, and he replied quickly, saying it was "a nickel." That was evidently the extent of his knowledge respecting money. When I asked him what he was going to do with it, he replied with a single word pronounced with intense earnestness,

"Buy!"

"Buy what?" I asked.

"Buy meat!" came the reply.

It was not candy; it was not chewing gum; it was not a toy, but it was meat, and to him "meat" was fat, salt pork.

Now mark you! This was the home of a basket-maker! Basket-making is the industry taught in our mountain mission schools, by good, self-sacrificing women and men, who condemn the cotton-mill. These good women and men have much more heart than common-sense. To them the poor child is overworked if he holds a remunerative job. Basket-making is easy work, and it is not remunerative. There is not the slightest chance of creating predatory wealth in the making of baskets, and there is no lint connected with it to get into the basket-maker's lungs.

I wished to see the head basket-maker, and father of this household,—the basket-maker who had been conserved from hard work and toil, and taught basket-making in one of our mountain mission schools. So I went up the trail towards the field where his brother said he had a job ploughing. I had not gone far when I met him, a slim, good-natured man coming through the woods with parts of a bull harness over one shoulder, and an old shoe in his hand, which he was contemplating curiously.

“I thought you had a job ploughing?” said I.

“So I had,” said he with a laugh, “but you oughter seen that bull highball up the mountain. He didn’t want ter plough any more then I did, an’ so he highballed. Thet let me out.”

“Going home?” said I.

“Yep! Got nuthin’ more ter do to-day. Ef Gaiter wants his field ploughed, he’ll hev ter catch thet ar’ bull his self. Besides it’s worth more then seventy-five cents ter plough thet ar’ field o’ hisen.”

I walked back to the shack with this man, father of four hungry children, living in the condition I have described. He talked volubly, and strange to say, he appeared unusually bright and intelligent. Not a line of his talk was dull or stupid, but on the contrary it sparkled with drollery. His conversation was interspersed with references to shooting and killing, with such remarks as “ef he war ter do et t’ me, I’d shoot the socks off of him.”

Though he did not have a pot in which to cook a mess of pottage, he assured me that he had a “six-shooter,” and that he knew how to use it, too. As I stood looking at him seated in the door of his miserable shack, I asked him why he did not get a wife to take care of his children for him. His reply is a fair example of the droll way he had of expressing himself.

“The woman I’m goin’ ter marry isn’t born, an’ her mammie is dead,” said he.

In less than half an hour after I left him seated in that

doorway, he was down at the neighboring store with the money I had given his little boy, buying a quantity of corn-meal, and a ration of pork. The store-keeper had hired his brother that morning to hoe his corn. I said to the store-keeper, as Christopher Columbus went away with his ration of pork and meal to feed himself and little ones,

"I thought you had his brother hoeing corn for you."

"So I did," came the reply, "but he white-eyed on me. They won't work."

Now what was the fundamental reason for this indolence and lack of thrift? There were two young, able-bodied men at least. I did not see the third. They were bright and intelligent, and so were their children, but they wouldn't work, and why was it they would not work? The answer is simple. They were not taught to work while children, and it was too late for them to get the habit now.

A cotton-mill to such as these would be little short of a God-send. The little girl growing up midst that awful condition of squalor, hunger and vice, at a cotton-mill, where the law has not interfered to say that such a child shall not work, would become at once a wage earner, earning an amount equal to that offered her father or uncle for hoeing corn or ploughing a whole day in the field. At the cotton-mill her worthless father and uncles would very shortly have to mend their ways or find themselves on the chaingang and such a home as their shack in the woods would not be tolerated in the mill community. As I thought of the changes wrought by the cotton-mill, I could picture to myself the joy with which that little girl with her mullen-leaf hat, would grasp her pay envelope and hasten home to her little brothers and sister. Yet our newspapers and magazines, our socialists and suffragettes, tell us about the iniquities of child labor, and plead for more legislation inhibiting the same.

CHAPTER XVII.

REPORTS OF THE FAMILIES GONE TO THE MILLS.

THE Great Smoky Mountains crook like an elbow around that little corner of Tennessee in which I enjoyed the hospitality of the young clergyman and his wife. I left their abode with threatening weather overhead, taking one of the numerous creeks that come down in many directions from the surrounding mountain range. My horse splashed along in the creek until the real climb up the mountains began, and then there were more of the same kind of rotting cabins such as I had seen coming down the Devil's Fork, their visible occupants being mostly women and children lolling around doing nothing.

Near the top of the range, I met a family moving. The father, a tall, gaunt fellow, stopped to answer my questions. The mother, carrying a small child, flung herself on the ground by the roadside, while the rest of the children stood awkwardly around. The man did not know precisely where he was moving to, but he said he wanted to find a piece of land on which to make a crop. He would find a vacant cabin, too, no doubt, into which he could move, light a fire and set up house-keeping with a peck of meal, a ration of pork, a frying-pan and a coffee-pot.

The divide was much pleasanter than where I had previously crossed the range. It was quite flat and more prolonged, and the trees grew as in a grove. A broken shingle nailed to a tree designated the State line, and another pointed out the direction of the Great Bald, a glimpse of which could be obtained through the trees far to my left—a round mountain top, without trees—hence its name.

As I descended the mountain a great change in the country was noticeable. A picturesque little cabin on a terraced side of the mountain first attracted my attention. It had a fence around it, and vines and indications of flowers. It also had windows, at one of which a white curtain fluttered. In the yard were tools for farming, and the ensemble formed a cheerful picture of rural life. Evidently the family living there had land, and by its cultivation made a decent living.



SUCH ABODES AS ARE USUALLY NEAR THE TOPS OF THE MOUNTAINS

Called a box house because it is hardly more than a box with a roof over it.

I had expected to learn something of the "moonshining" for which these mountains are notorious but hitherto I had obtained no evidence of any being carried on. Therefore, when I suddenly looked down upon a man in the road who looked to me as a moonshiner ought to look, I thought the opportunity had arrived when I might learn something about the industry at first hand. He answered my rather abrupt "Hello" with a punctilious,

"What might your name be, suh?"

I gave him my name, which was like Greek to him but he insisted upon getting it right, and then he gave me his, which was the same as that borne by the famous French General who commanded the storming of the Malakoff at Sebastopol and afterwards became President of the French Republic. But the great MacMahon never claimed to be Scotch-Irish, as it is said these people of the mountains are. His ancestors were plain Irish, as are the names of many of the mountain people.

My suspected moonshiner with the Irish name had something the matter with his eyes. He stood squinting and blinking at me. As he had given me his name, I asked him softly if he wouldn't show me where I could get a little of the "blockade" for which the mountains were so famous. The old fellow's blinking increased as he showed righteous indignation, and he finally snapped out:

"Do you follow drinking for a living?"

I saw at once I had made a mistake. The man was not a moonshiner at all, but he proved to be a Baptist preacher.

A little farther on I came to a school-house. Our national emblem floated above it gaily in the breeze. It was the first time, with one exception, that I had seen the flag since leaving Asheville. That one exception was at an old veteran's house the other side of Marshall. He had a small flag nailed to the porch of his house, and the veteran himself still wore his old army great-coat. I mention this because it is said that there are persons in the mountains who never saw the American flag, and I believe it is true.

The sun shone brightly on the school-house, as children gathered around, ate their luncheons, or stood looking on. Running, yelling, playing, such as one is accustomed to during the recess hour at school in our cities, were plainly marked by their absence. Still, it was a bright mountain spot, for not only must there be some progress where there was such a school, but the cabins I had passed showed a much higher social state than those on the other side of the mountain. Did this higher social state produce the school, or did the school

produce the higher social state, are questions I should like to have answered by those who profess to know.

As I hurried on down the mountain, thinking it was time Rosinante had his corn, I encountered a fine-looking, middle-aged man with dark ringlets showing beneath the brim of his upturned soft felt hat. He smiled pleasantly as we exchanged the customary salutations. Reining up, I asked him whether any families had gone from those parts to the cotton-mills. He replied promptly that he estimated that within the past six months sixty persons had left, the majority of them going to Spartanburgh, South Carolina. He said that one Cage Blackenship, who had moved to the mills with his family some years before, made a business of returning to his old neighborhood, and induced families to go to the mills with him. Of those who went, about one-third returned, but after "messaging" around in the mountains for a while, they would usually go back to the cotton-mill, where they remained for good.

He said further that it was usually the very poor, or those who could not make both ends meet in their mountain homes, who went to the mills. I asked him whether any of the farmers who were comfortably situated ever left, to which he replied that he knew of only one. This man had owned two hundred acres of land, five horses and fifteen head of cattle. He suddenly resolved to leave the country, and, selling everything he had, he went to the mills, taking eight of his children with him. Within six months after his arrival at the mills he had gone through all the money he had realized from the sale of his property, and then he went to work. His married daughter, who remained in the mountains, had heard from him recently, and she said that five of the eight children were in the mill, making money and doing well. Further questioning developed the fact that the real cause of this man's break-up was his marriage after having lost his first wife, to a slattern and lewd woman.

My notes were taken without dismounting, and as I finally

asked where I could obtain corn for my horse, the man directed me to the next house, indicating his own, a frame, nicely painted, on a little plateau between the mountains. He said he would invite me there, but his folks were all away. However, he was sure his brother, who was a doctor, would feed my horse and give me something to eat as well.

Hurrying on I came to the doctor's house. The doctor was crossing the creek on the foot-log between the house and barn. He was distinguished in appearance by a derby hat, a cut-away coat and a vest. He greeted me cheerfully, inviting me to dismount, saying he would not only feed my horse but would have his wife put up a "snack" for me, the dinner hour having already passed.

After seeing that my horse was fed and partaking of the meal prepared for me, I sat with the doctor on his porch facing the mountain stream, discussing the conditions in the mountains as he knew them, and at the mills as he did not know them. He was greatly interested in the topic of my investigation, for he, too, had read about child labor at the cotton-mills, and the poor little children. He said he did not like to see his neighbors leave their home for the mills, and whenever he heard of a family preparing to leave, he personally went to them, and used every argument he could think of to induce them to remain where they were. It might be that they had had bad luck, had insufficient corn to do them through the winter, and all that, but they could get along somehow, and the neighbors would help them out. His advice was always to try and pull through. The coming year might bring them better luck.

His opinions were interesting. He confessed that he did not know anything about conditions at the mills, and that the reports of those who did go to them were generally favorable, but he did not like to see them go, and then he pitied the children who had to work so hard. Labor was becoming scarcer in the mountains too, and as the people went away, good tenants to cultivate the available lands were harder to get.

With respect to his medical practice, and the diseases he had to contend with, I hoped to get some facts. He said tuberculosis of the lungs was quite common, but it was not as common as typhoid fever and pneumonia. He estimated that for every case of tuberculosis, he had two of typhoid and four of pneumonia. Pneumonia he attributed to exposure. Tuberculosis was the result of pneumonia, and typhoid was due to drinking impure surface-water.¹

With respect to the different classes of people he said he would divide them into four groups. There was the land-owner having a hundred acres or more, usually a good, solid citizen, whom he rated as first class. In the second class he placed the thrifty tenant who remained in one place and usually made enough to support his family fairly well. The third class was made up of those who did not seem to get along at all. They moved frequently, made barely enough corn to supply their families through the winter, and passed a sort of hand-to-hand existence. Finally there was "a very low and trashy set" whom he described as immoral and incapable of doing anything. They were mostly nomads, moving from place to place, taking up their abodes in any old cabin they might get the owner's permission to occupy, on a promise to put in a crop; but they wouldn't do anything beyond getting into debt, and then they would pull out and go to some other place.

When I asked him what he meant by these people being immoral, he replied that he meant about everything that was bad. They were profane, lewd, and obscene. The only care they took of their children was to provide their food, such as it was, and get them enough clothing to cover their nakedness. They had no ideas about rearing them or improving them in any way, either mentally, morally or physically. Naturally such children continued to grow up like their parents, without any moral responsibility.

¹ The only families provided with privies were those that had substantial farms and I observed that their privies were always over a stream of running water.

I asked him whether it was not this most worthless class that usually went to the cotton-mills.

"Yes," he replied, "but they are too worthless to remain anywhere. They go, but they won't stay. Those who go, and stay, are generally a better class of tenants who find it hard to make a living here."

"Don't you think these people are better off at the mills then?" I asked.

"They usually report that they are," he answered, "and some of them we are glad to get rid of; but think of those little children who have to work all day in the close, confining atmosphere of the mill, and then we are so short of labor here, too."

"How about these same children right here in the mountains, who, you say, grow up learning to curse and swear and lead immoral lives, and who are poorly fed and clothed?"

"It is a problem," said he, "and my heart often goes out in sympathy for them; but what can we do so long as they have the parents they have. They won't go to school, and we can't take them away from their parents. It seems to me that if you could induce the Government to do something for them, that would be the thing to do."

As I took my leave of him he refused to make the usual charge for feeding my horse and keeping me, saying:

"Let it be my contribution toward doing something for the little children we have been talking about. Of course I know you will tell the Government the truth, and I hope it will result in the Government's taking an interest—that something may be done for our poor children."

He directed me to a substantial farmer who, he said, would keep me for the night. I pushed on in an easterly direction following the trend of the mountain range, through undulating valleys, sprinkled with farms and farm-houses. A ride of ten miles brought me to a two-story house, painted white, which I judged to be the one I was looking for. I asked a well-built young man whether I could stop for the night. Replying

that I could, he immediately came down to me, while a negro appearing from another quarter, was directed to take my horse. The negro attracted my attention because he was the first one I had seen since leaving Marshall.

The young man, inviting me to be seated on the porch, took a seat near me, saying his father would be in shortly. His language and manner denoted good education and training, and I soon ascertained that he had been in college, and that he was now a traveling salesman, at home on a vacation.



THE CONFEDERATE VETERAN'S HOME

While we were conversing, his father appeared. He was a short, heavy-set, robust man, a Confederate veteran, who was as proud of his services in the Army of Virginia under Lee as my host in Shelton-Laurel was proud of his service in the Union army. He was a thrifty, well-to-do farmer. He had obtained a premium for his apples at several international expositions, including one in Paris, I believe. Shortly after he joined us, we were summoned to supper. His table was presided over by a small, gentle woman who sat at one end. She bowed to me pleasantly, but scarcely spoke during the

meal, which consisted of an abundance of country fare—ham, salt pork, sourkrout, eggs, corn-bread, biscuit, preserved fruits, butter and honey,—enough to feed a detachment of soldiers.

While at first my host appeared a little reserved in his demeanor, as we got better acquainted he became talkative and most interesting in his narratives. He lighted me to bed in a room upstairs, and sat down on the bed to talk in a companionable way, telling me about some of the people he knew.

The morning dawned stormy, and though Bob, the negro, had saddled my horse and brought him to the hitching-post, I passed several pleasant hours seated with the old veteran by the fire listening to his narratives of the war, the folks in the country around, and some of his own experiences in the Army of Northern Virginia. The huge back-log with the fire roaring up the chimney against it, may have added to my reluctance to venture on until later in the day.

My host told me that until the new railroad was recently put through along the Toe River, it was forty miles to the nearest railroad. He related how he used to have to wagon his produce to the old State Road in Buncombe County, and thence down to Greenville, South Carolina, more than a hundred miles away. Referring to the reputed lawlessness of that part of the Blue Ridge bordering the North Carolina line, he said the wagoners going through that part of the country would keep pretty close together, and form a common camp at night, but he did not think the reputed lawless element was as bad as represented. On one occasion he had sold some cheese to a merchant on his way down, agreeing to stop for payment on his return. When he returned the merchant was not at home. Expressing his anxiety to see him, a negro servant guided him through the woods to a moonshiner's still, where at first he was scared at the wild looking men gathered there, but the merchant extending him a welcome, he was never treated better in his life.

With respect to the families who went to the cotton-mills,

he said not many went from his immediate neighborhood, for the farms were productive, and no one ever went to the mills unless they were starved out and had to go. As an example of those who did go, he named one "Sis Dockery," who was one of his tenants. Her husband had died, leaving her with six or seven children. She could not raise enough corn to support them, so she went to the mills. After being away some time she returned much better off than when she went away. When it was suggested that she remain, she said



A MOUNTAINEER'S TEAM FEEDING

she could not make a living on the farm, but at the mill she saved money. After she returned to the mill, her father made her a visit. When he came home he said that she was living in a good house, well furnished, and that her younger children were going to school, while the elder ones were earning good money in the mill, and that there was no question but she was better off than ever before.

As I had no definite plans respecting my journey farther on, I acted upon my host's suggestion, and took a road diverging to the north, that would take me to Mitchell's county-seat.

I stopped for dinner with the postmaster at the mouth of Mine Fork. He lived in a roughly-built, but comfortable board house papered with old newspapers. He was a kindly man who kept a little store at the cross-roads. He owned forty acres of land, with a good barn, and necessary outhouses. His wife served us a dinner of salt pork in abundance, potatoes and "sour cabbage," with the usual corn-bread and biscuit.

Mine Fork was justly infamous, I learned, for its fights and killing scrapes, due to blockade whiskey and inherent devilishness. It had no church or school-house in the district until recently. The Baptists had put up a board structure, which they called a church. Since then conditions had improved considerably, they said. A few years previously, a stranger passing through the district was liable to attack. Even the children would curse him, and hurl stones at him from a safe distance on the mountain-side. Men in their half drunken orgies would shoot at him just for fun, and women cursed their own children, and would not hesitate to curse the stranger too.

The record in my note-book for that day states that "D. F. Young, postmaster, merchant, and farmer, reports that from Mine Fork, a very bad locality where they make moonshine, shoot, fight, and kill, seven families have gone to the mills in the past six years. Annie Laws went six years ago, with two illegitimate children. Two of the families owned their own land, but lived hard. Lem Phillips was not worth twenty-five dollars when he went to Carolina six years ago with his wife and five children. He now owns two lots and one double team, and is doing well. People leave because they are hard up and can't make a living. Some leave on account of getting into trouble, selling whiskey and finding themselves indicted; they skip out, and the authorities are glad to get rid of them."

From Mine Fork my road wound around among hills. Once I stopped at a little store by the roadside, a mere box without windows, with a fat, boy-like man leaning against the outside with his hands in his pockets. A bunch of leather thongs hung by the side of the door, reminded me that I needed

some such thing to mend my saddle-bags. Buying two of the thongs, and seeing a pan of eggs inside, I asked the price of eggs.

"They a'r high now," drawled the boy-like man, "I ust'r be glad ter git five cents a dozen fur mine 'fore I kept store, but since the railroad's put through, the price's gone way up, an' I hev ter pay ten cents fur them in trade. I git ten cents fur 'em in cash, down ter the railroad."



A DWELLING IN MINE FORK DISTRICT

An assistant on my second investigation after taking this photograph was followed by the woman in the door and cursed roundly.

A little farther on I came to the Toe River, a great winding stream that once marked the limits of Buncombe County. On the opposite bank the gray stone bed of the new railroad, opening up the country and sending the price of eggs up to ten cents a dozen, stood out conspicuously. I had to ford the stream, and I did not know what moment old Rosinante would be swept off his feet by the current, or would step into a treacherous pool, and we both would be drowned. Landing

safely on the opposite side with no more serious mishap than a wetting, I took a road which led me up over a country of red hills, without trees, without shrubs, without anything green whatever. The land looked as if it had been worked, and reworked, and was still being worked; and there were little board houses, and picturesque cabins, and more houses, some better and some worse. Deep erosions of the treeless hill-sides indicated that the country had long been cleared and settled. I passed a white church, beyond which, down in a hollow, was another white church. On the sky line to the left, was a gray cabin set on the rim of the brownish red earth with a row of tall, slender trees bent whip-like from the constant blowing of the wind in one direction, the whole forming an odd picture with the blue sky for a background. As I looked at the scene, I was accosted by a man with a roll of paper in his hand, accompanied by two others.

"What is your name, sir?" he said, and before I could reply he added, "mine is Young, Jeff Young." And he held up his hand for me to shake.

When I had told him my name he introduced me to the rest of the company as if, though a stranger to them, I were his old friend. With my mind on the two churches, I asked him what kind of church was that down in the hollow, and he replied:

"Northern Methodist."

"And the one I just passed?"

"Southern Methodist."

"What's the difference between the two?" I asked.

"Politics, I reckon," and he laughed.

In answer to my further inquiries, he said no one went from that section of the country to the cotton-mills; that the lands were pretty well worked; that nearly all the farmers were small landowners; and that they made just about enough to live on. They used no fertilizer on their land, nevertheless it was still productive.

The road, winding some miles further on down hills and between hills, brought me to the Toe River again, and to the

railroad. There I was directed to follow a stream called Cane Creek, to Bakersville, the seat of Mitchell County. I went up a wild ravine. The rock-bound cliffs on either side fell away at Loafer's Glory, where were little board houses and a cabin or two, almost as plenty as in a village street, and a district school-house. A local wag had appropriately named the place, it was said.

A mile farther on I rode up the bank of the creek into Bakersville, where a heroic attempt was being made to build a new court-house as a presentable reason for not moving the county-seat down to some point on the railroad as was proposed by many of the county voters, some of whom maintained that they could make a trip to the capital of the United States with greater ease, and at less expense, than to their own county-seat. An old brick, two-story rambling sort of building with the sign "Hotel," under which tilted the proprietor at his ease, looked good to me after my long ride and wetting in Toe River, and I let him take my horse and put me up for the night.

CHAPTER XVIII.

BACK TO MARSHALL.

BAKERSVILLE consisted of one street with four roads converging from cardinal points, four or five churches, an academy, a court-house, a county clerk, a jail and half a dozen lawyers exclusive of a sheriff, a jailor and a town marshal. Its population was given as five hundred, and its altitude as two thousand four hundred and sixty feet. It did not seem to me that it had five hundred inhabitants, and upon making inquiry I was told that a cloud-burst in the mountains at the head of the creek a few years previously, had carried half the town away and nearly all the bottom land along the creek with it, forcing many of the people to move elsewhere in order to make a living.

Besides its lawyers, occupied in getting prisoners in jail and out again, there was one shoemaker, and one saddler, but the shoemaker did not make any shoes because his customers liked store shoes better; and the saddler did not make any saddles because he had no leather. There were two practicing physicians in the place, one of whom claimed to be a medical graduate and the other was not, and they were the only physicians for miles around. There were a few good houses and the rest of them were ram-shackle and old-looking but the town was not old. The academy building when you entered it shook as if from an earthquake, and its painted side walls for blackboards presented a surface almost impossible on which to make a chalk mark.

But I liked the place, remaining a day or two to look around and recuperate. Among my pleasant recollections of the

quaint town was a funny man who kept a funny store, and who moved about among his boxes and barrels of miscellaneous merchandise when waiting upon a customer, like an elephant looking for peanuts, and who was always forgetting himself, answered my questions with a "Yes, marm" or a "No, marm." There was the honest, frank keeper of the principal hotel, who was always on the move; who set one of the best tables for a country hotel I ever sat down to, and who charged only fourteen dollars a month for his fare. And then there were the lawyers and the town marshal, and the mayor, all good fellows in their way, though their business was to make the poor people and strangers pay, for, as one of the lawyers said, when they subsequently arrested me for riding on the sidewalk, the town "couldn't be run fur nothin'."¹

There was the old Confederate Colonel, a polished gentleman, but a sort of political black sheep in a Republican fold, who owned the one fine house in the place, and after putting in a bath-tub, probably the only one in the county,—and many counties around for that matter—was prohibited laying a drain-pipe under the street to carry the water off, for such innovations were unheard of in a town like Bakersville. There was his manly son who, after he was graduated from college became a traveling salesman, and who freely discussed conditions with me. And there were the quaint people from the mountains around, with their quaint manners and speech, such as old Sol Pittman, who declared his wife planted her onions so close to his potatoes that they put the potatoes' eyes out, and old man Burleson who was strongly suspected of making a little whiskey on the sly.

The County is known as one of the poorest in North Carolina, and it has shared with Madison County the name

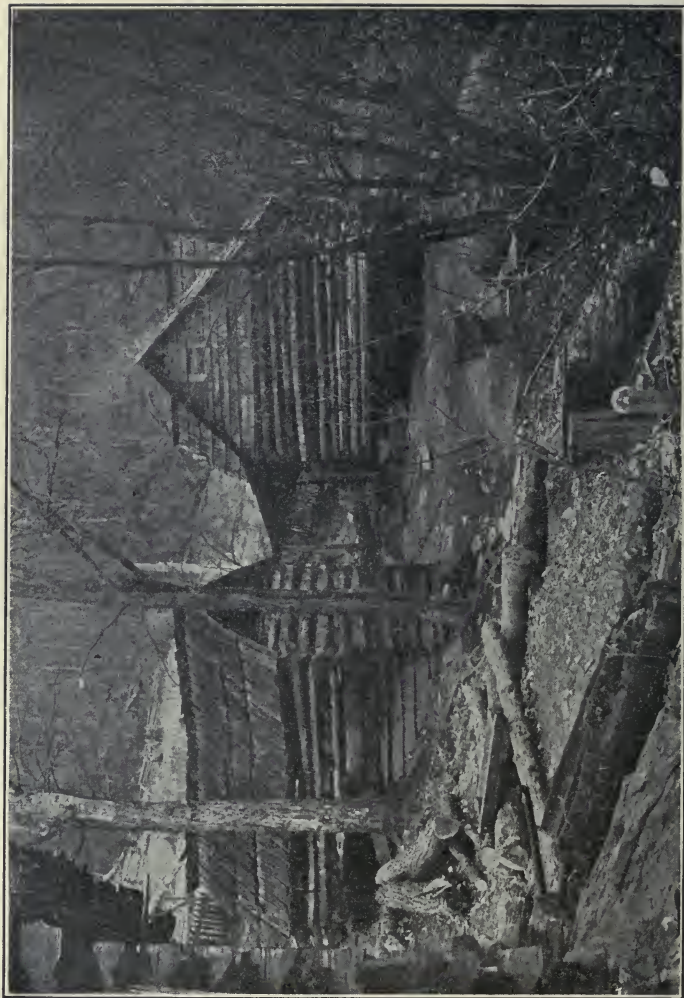
¹ This occurred on my second investigation. My horse refusing to plunge into the mud in the middle of the road, jumped to the side path and persisted in keeping it. On my return to town, I was arrested by the town Marshall, and when I offered to pay the prescribed fine of fifty cents, I was confronted with a bill of costs amounting to sixteen dollars. Demanding a trial, I proved by the prosecution's own witnesses that I did not wilfully ride on the sidewalk, and consequently won the case.

"bloody." At the time of my visit it had had a wave of prosperity, and for a short period in its history had heard the clank of a printing-press and the ring of a telephone. The building of the railroad along the Toe River had furnished many of its poor people with the means of earning a few dollars above their taxes, had enabled them to put stoves in their cabins, and some of the more thrifty ones to build new houses, while some others had bought little plots of land of their own. Previous to the coming of the railroad the people had little or no means of procuring money at all, and consequently their taxes were a most serious burden. Their poll-tax alone was nearly four and a half dollars a year,¹ and they were obliged to work eight days on the public roads or pay another four dollars.

Before the opening up of the country by the railroad and incidentally some lumber industries, almost the only resource of the county, bringing money into it, was the mining of mica. Some few individuals having struck an occasional rich vein of this mineral had realized considerable money, while the mining and cutting of the mica had given employment to others. Less fortunate ones came in for the leavings at the dumps, near the mouths of the mines. Scraping over the refuse material, they gathered up the scrap mica, realizing on it a mere pittance, very often no more than ten cents as the result of a day's work. Only those in the most abject state of poverty, however, engaged in this latter occupation.

According to one of the lawyers, who freely supplied me with information, the construction of the railroad having been completed, and the lumber industries suspended, the people were confronted with the problem of what to do next. There were two alternatives facing them—to turn their attention to their little farms and make the most of them, or leave the country, as many had been forced to do in times past. The little farms so-called, were scarcely sufficient to produce

¹ This amount through a suit brought by the railroad, was subsequently declared unconstitutional by the State Supreme Court, and the amount was reduced to two dollars.



HOME OF FATHER, MOTHER AND THIRTEEN CHILDREN

Near the top of Yellow Mountain, Mitchell County, N. C. The owner of this home was said to be industrious and it was reputed that he made moonshine whiskey. Imagine the educational opportunities of the children.

enough for the family sustenance, and unless work could be procured at wages, many of the people would be obliged to leave the country. The same lawyer, giving me this information, complained bitterly of the representations that had gone abroad, and had been published by different writers, respecting the poverty and degradation of the people. He did not think they had been treated fairly at all. While there were some poor people in the county no doubt, there were many who, while not rich, formed a good class of thrifty, small landowners and upright citizens.

As the county had been reported as one of those in which the negro was not permitted to abide, he said that it was true in respect to one township only, and that was Rock Creek Township, lying on the other side of old Pumpkin Patch Mountain which seemed to loom above us like a grim sentinel. Whether the mountain was named from the huge yellowish-brown boulders scattered over it resembling pumpkins, or whether once on a time there had been a real pumpkin patch up there, seemed to be a moot question.

Rock Creek on the other side of the mountain, had the reputation of being one of those peculiar little worlds unto itself, and almost anything occurring in the county that was bad was attributed to Rock Creek. The people were said to differ from those living elsewhere, even in their physiognomy. One very pale-faced, anæmic young man riding along the road was pointed out to me as a Rock Creek type, although he was unknown to the party designating him as such. It was said that while their antipathy to the negro was well known, and no negro knowing the reputation the country bore, would venture into it, it was not thought that anything would happen to an unsuspecting negro traveling through there, beyond his being scared out of his very wits, as had happened on a number of occasions. The Rock Creek men would play their pranks on him to the extent of "making him eat sand," and shooting all around him, and finally giving him a chance to run, would chase him, yelling after him like Indians. On one

occasion a Republican candidate for some office unsuspectingly went up there with a negro band from the lower part of the State. What happened to that band no one was able to tell further than that a number of strange negroes, some with instruments and some without, were reported from various parts of the mountains soon afterwards, trying to find their way out.

From Bakersville I continued my journey in a southerly direction to a small settlement called Spruce Pine, stopping to pick up information as I went along. The lawyer having recommended me to a lady who had spent several years in the county carrying on a little community work of her own without the aid of any society or organization, I passed two hurried hours at her cottage among fragrant trees and woods just bursting out in all their spring-time glory.

Her view-point of the people and conditions was decidedly interesting. She expressed great sympathy for the poor people with whom she came in daily contact, but little for the county officials and occasional land magnates, who had everything very much their own way. There were so many things she could not understand, such as the people not being afraid of germs and dirt, and then they shut crazy people up in jail, and there were so many of them, too, she said, but she did not think they were so very crazy after all.

To illustrate this point she told of the sheriff, on one occasion, taking a crazy woman in a conveyance to the State Asylum, more than sixty miles away. Before he got to his destination he became hopelessly drunk. The driver of the conveyance not knowing what to do, the crazy woman directed him to drive to the sheriff's office upon their arrival at the town. The sheriff coming out, she said to him,

"I have a drunken man here; I wish you would lock him up," and the drunken man was hauled out of the wagon and locked up by his brother sheriff, not knowing who he was.

Then the woman directed the driver to take her to the asylum, and there she said to the superintendent,

"I am crazy, I want you to lock me up."

"Now," said the lady, "I should like to know which of the two was the craziest."

As the lady was a trained nurse, her attention was naturally directed to the medical situation in the county. She said that the only two doctors were those at the county-seat, with an occasional "jack-leg doctor" or two, who practiced under what she termed the "grandfather law," which permitted all who had practiced medicine previous to a certain date to continue their practice without obtaining a license based upon any other qualification. Some of them, she said, could barely read and write. She administered to the poor and needy in her neighborhood, and as she was neither a graduate in medicine nor could qualify as a medical practitioner under the "grandfather clause" she was threatened with arrest.

She thought it shameful the way those who practiced took advantage of the poor people, often refusing to attend them or answer an urgent call unless assured of payment for their service, and she showed me a mortgage deed such as they were in the habit of taking to secure payment, cow, calf, pig, stack of fodder, or anything else the poor person might possess, being covered by the mortgage. While she said she required payment for her services too, she found her patients would always pay her, and very often she would take her pay in eggs, chickens, fodder for her horse, or anything else offered her that she could make use of. She said nearly all the people were sick, or had something or another the matter with them, and she was constantly answering their calls. She wanted to have a hospital built for them right in the neighborhood, where they would receive proper medical attention, but my advice to her was to build them a cotton-mill, so they would get a job and not get sick.

At Spruce Pine I forded the Toe River in a down-pouring rain. Between the hills I stopped at a long, rambling structure, consisting of three log cabins joined together under one roof. A sprightly girl calling to me from the porch, told me

to put my horse in the barn and come in out of the rain, which I gladly did, and I was soon made comfortable by the roaring fire in the big fireplace.

The owner of this place was a vigorous old man somewhere around ninety years old, talkative, and as full of information as could be. He freely gave me details about the country and its people which were corroborative of about all I had already heard. He said some of the landowners were



A TENANT-FAMILY'S CABIN

getting rid of their tenants as fast as they could. One man the owner of over five thousand acres, refused to allow a tenant on it under the old sharing system, but had adopted a plan of breaking and ploughing such land as he wanted cultivated, and then letting it out to be planted and cared for, for half the crop. Another landlord, owner of thirteen hundred acres, was putting all that was available into grass and apples. He had three or four tenants only, whom he employed, and he allowed them to keep a hog and enough land for a garden. Another landlord had adopted the plan of charg-

ing his tenants ten dollars a year for house-rent, besides one-third of their crop and fifty cents a month for pasturage, if they had a cow. Some would not agree to any such arrangement, and were moving off. Others had made enough working for the railroad to buy little places of their own. A large landowner who had between fifty and sixty families living on his land had notified them that he was going to charge a cash rental the coming year, because many of them, since getting work on the railroad, had made hardly any crops or none at all, with the result that on the sharing basis the landlord got little or no rent.

He expressed little sympathy for the indigent people of the country. He said they were poor because they lacked management and would not work. The conditions of some were unfortunate, to be sure, like those living on the head-waters of the Toe River and far up on Mount Mitchell, where the season was so short that corn would not ripen and they could not raise enough to feed themselves. But there were those who had more natural advantages, who would not work. As he expressed it, "They worked their women and bred them to death." Poor as they were, however, they were very independent, often refusing work for good wages, preferring the irregular occupation of gathering "galax" leaves, herbs and roots, or digging scrap mica, at which they could barely make enough to pay for their rations, to having regular work with someone over them.

Leaving the old gentleman after a comfortable night in one of the many rooms of his commodious cabins, one of which was the original built by his father, one of the first settlers in that part of the country, I journeyed nearly due north to the county-seat. It was at this place that Judge Pritchard had said that "there was not a rock on Burnsville hill that had not skinned somebody's head," and from other sources it was also reported that circuit judges had been afraid to go there to hold court. When Frederic Law Olmstead visited it prior to the civil war, he mentioned having seen only three log

cabins there. The first one was closed. At the second one was an old man smoking a pipe, and to Mr. Olmstead's inquiry to be directed to Burnsville, the old man, taking his pipe from his mouth, said,

"Why, Mister, you're right in Burnsville."

Since then the place has grown. The Presbyterian Board of Home Missions, having discovered it as one of the worst places on the map, had put up a splendid educational plant, consisting of a large school building, a parsonage, teachers' cottages, dormitories, etc. The Burnsville Baptists, looking upon this work with jealousy, succeeded in raising enough money to put another school they called a Seminary, in opposition, so that Burnsville, with its population of two hundred and seven souls,¹ had two great institutions of learning, and both had to scour the country for miles around for pupils, at the seemingly insignificant rate of eight, ten or twelve dollars a month, or as much as they could get, in a country where the majority of the people did not see ten dollars a year.

On the other hand there was not a shoemaker, a baker, or a candlestick maker—not an industry of any kind, in the town. Its three or four stores were filled with merchandise, such as shoes, shirts, and stockings, cod-liver oil and balsam, snuff and tobacco and a little whiskey, it was said. Of all these things, the product of the human mind combined with energy industry and toil, not one was the product of a home industry, unless it was the whiskey, and since times and conditions had changed, it is doubtful whether even this was the genuine old moonshine of yore.

There was a well-built, rambling structure for a hotel, capable of holding many guests, owned by a descendant of an early Kentuckian settler who came into the country with all his possessions tied in a bandana handkerchief, but who died a rich landowner. The hotel was closed. During court session it was furnished up and opened for the judges and

¹ This was according to the Census of 1900.

juries who came to try the causes, and the witnesses and the interested and disinterested parties who came to hear them.

Recently the citizens of Burnsville had wanted a new court-house, but a vote being taken on the matter, the majority of the votes from the surrounding country had decided otherwise. A new court-house meant the expenditure of money and increased taxes, which the country people felt they could little afford. But the citizens of Burnsville, although overruled by the majority of voters, determined to have a new court-house and revolted. Under the cover of darkness they sallied forth, and something after the fashion of Latin-American Revolutionists in the minority, or the Boston Tea Party, they pulled the old court-house down, thus necessitating the building of a new one.

I interviewed the Presbyterian Minister and the Postmaster, respectively, with reference to families going to the mills. The minister was very much opposed to their going, insisting that they should send their children to school and have them educated. At the same time he showed me a photograph of a family consisting of father, mother and fifteen children, complaining that the mother would not send the children to school, and they could barely read and write. I called at his school just after closing exercises, and one of the teachers looking from the door which she held ajar, asked to be excused because the teachers were having their meeting to devise ways and means to help foreign missions.

I attended services at the Baptist church, and incidentally with the sermon preached by a young man, a graduate from the Baptist Seminary, he told of the great work the Baptists were doing in heathen China, proselyting and educating the poor Chinamen, and he pleaded for money to help their cause along.

The postmaster, on the other hand, intimated that he did not believe in all that foreign mission work. He thought the enforced building of the court house a piece of high-handed extravagance, and with respect to the families going to the



A FAMILY CONSISTING OF FATHER, MOTHER AND FIFTEEN CHILDREN

They belong to the class of small but respectable farmers, owning their own land. About the time this picture was taken they had discovered a mica mine that brought them in considerable.

mills, he said, all he knew who had gone, if they had children big enough to work, had certainly improved their circumstances.

"There's Amos Angle, for example," said he, by way of illustration. "When Amos lived here, he was hardly able to keep his head above water. Three years ago he went to the cotton-mills with his wife, and I don't know how many children, but only two of the children were big enough to work. Now Amos has a nice house well furnished, a fine milk cow, and he is saving money."

After leaving Burnsville, I was overtaken by a man riding a superb black horse. As he rode by my side, after saluting me, I remarked by way of entering into conversation, that it was a fine horse he was riding, and he agreeing with me, I asked him how he would trade for my one-eyed Rosinante. He was ready to strike up a trade at once. The question was simply how much would I give "to boot."

I asked him what he knew about the cotton-mills. He replied that all he knew was that the families from his part of the country reported themselves better off at the mills. He lived up on Sampson Mountain, on the edge of Egypt, he said, and the country was so poor up there, though he raised considerable corn himself, he was thinking of selling out and leaving. His neighbor Frank Page had eight or ten girls, he wasn't sure which, but there was a house full of them, and as Frank couldn't make enough corn to feed them, with all their help, he was preparing to sell out and take them to the cotton-mill too.

At a lonely church by the wayside, I met a mountain preacher astride a big mule waiting for a congregation. Even he said that the families at the mills did better than they did in the mountains. He told me of one man whom he knew personally, a landowner with a hundred acres valued at three thousand dollars, who had not been able to make enough to feed his children, "a raft of them," so he sold off his stock, let his land out to someone else, and went to the cotton-

mill. Now he was doing well clerking in a store, and his children were producing a good income from their work in the mill.

While we were conversing, three or four men came straggling across the field. As they came up to us, the preacher addressed them in turn as Brother so-and-so, and they, climbing up on the fence, sat in a row waiting for the preacher to get off his mule, and begin his "preachin'."



WAITING FOR HIS CONGREGATION

A few miles farther on I came to another seat of learning that interested me greatly. The college that gave the place its reason for existence, was a Baptist institution antedating the civil war. Its principal was a Southern gentleman, who, with his wife, was devoting the best part of his life to teaching mathematics and languages, both living and dead, chiefly a dead one, however.

I had my dinner that day at the kind invitation of a lady whom I had met on a previous occasion at Asheville. She was from South Carolina, and the sister of the Governor

of one of our Northern States who is now a Presidential candidate.¹ I found her bitterly opposed to cotton-mills, and almost any kind of labor. She persisted in believing that the poorest of the poor people were better off in their cabin homes amid the trees, fine air and water of the mountains, even if they couldn't be educated, than at the mills. When I smiled at the picture she drew of the blissful lives of these people on their little farms, she said,

"I am afraid you have been looking down, and not up. If we look down, we can always find the worms and dirt. You should raise your head and look only at the beautiful things—the blue sky, the green hills—and you should fill your lungs with our grand old mountain air."

It seemed to me that that is the way investigations are very often made.

That evening I was back in Marshall again, with my friends gathering around me to know how I had fared on my long journey, and how it was the moonshiners had not taken me for a "revenue." But I hadn't seen a moonshiner to know him in the entire journey, and as for fare, I had fared splendidly. Even old Rosinante was in better condition than when we left.

¹ Since elected President.

CHAPTER XIX.

THOU SHALT NOT TOIL, NEITHER SHALT THOU SPIN.

PASSING from a late train through a brilliantly-lighted terminal, I found myself facing an extemporized midway aglow with electric lights, flaring torches and illuminated tents. The mingling of automatic pianos, drums, trumpets and raucous voices crying out games of chance, or barking for the tent shows of whirling dervishes, minstrels and freaks, rose above the hum of the moving multitudes. A row of bar rooms, stripped of their tinsel and glory, lined the opposite side of the street, while their ci-devant bartenders, mild eyed and dejected, tried to sell an imitation beer, for the town had gone dry. This was Knoxville, Tennessee.

Conspicuous among the moving throng was a fat mountain girl radiant in a new dress of striped calico. She carried an infant in her arms and cursed with astonishing volubility, a lean, lanky, moss-bearded youth, apparently the father of the child. She pushed him repeatedly into the gutter as she cursed him, to the amusement of the crowd.

A ragged, bare-footed, bare-legged and bare-armed little urchin limped in and out among the multitude, extending his hand pleadingly. His naked limbs reflected the lurid light grewsomely. He limped as if the stones hurt his feet, and as his irregular course eventually brought him to me, I asked him why he was begging.

"Movver can't git 'nuff work t' feed all on us, an' so I has ter beg," came the reply.

"What does your mother do?" I asked.

"She washes an' scrubs 'round fur folks, but she can't

git 'nuff ter keep us kids. I'se de oldes', so I has ter beg."

"Can't you work some too?" I asked.

"I did work. I had a good job. Den de boss said dey made a law dat a kid coul'n't work no more, an' dey put me out. Movver coul'n't make 'nuff fur us all, so I has ter beg."

"How old are you?"

"I'se twelve goin' on d'irteen."

"And where did you work?"

"I worked down in de cotton-mill. Had a good job dere, an' movver an we 'uns got along all right. Den dey raised de age what a kid could work at, an' dey put me out."

I know not how to express my feelings as I stood looking down at the boy. Here in the street ablaze with lights and lust and licentiousness, was this ragged, hungry child, a vivid and unexpected example of the effect of the law that said to him, "Thou shalt not work!"

I thought of his home, his mother, and his brothers and sisters for whom he had to go out into the streets and beg, and that good job he had when they got along all right, and he could go home early and sleep peacefully, and in the morning go to his kindergarten job earning the little money necessary to help keep his brothers and sisters in food and clothing.

"Poor little beggar!" I thought—"the product of an unrighteous law!" So it seemed to me.

He limped away clutching tightly the coin I gave him, on his promise to go home at once to his mother, his brothers and sisters.

A street-car ride the next morning took me to the cotton-mill from which the child had been legislated to beggary on the streets. I looked up at the great walls of the factory that had been represented as grinding human lives away in order that the rich might live in luxury and idleness. I entered the well-appointed offices, and at a desk in one of them I presented my card to the assistant superintendent of the mill. Looking at the card, he looked at me, and then he began a tirade against child labor that fairly took my breath away. He condemned

the worthless, good-for-nothing parents who would not work, and who lived on the earnings of their children. He told of bringing them down from the mountains, of supplying them with food and fuel, furniture and a house, and they would not work. He spoke of their ignorance and inability to do anything, and described the idle father sitting whittling on a shoe-box, with his children growing up dirty and ragged around him, and not caring whether they learned anything or not. The children should be compelled to go to school, and as for the father, the best place for him was in jail. To prove all he said, he took me out of the mill to a place where there were barren brown patches of earth and cheerless houses, and women and children and be-whiskered old men on the porches, and hungry dogs around, presenting some such scenes of idleness and sloth as I had seen in the early part of my investigations at Asheville, but worse perhaps and more of them.

"You see," said he, "you don't know anything about these people. You don't know how worthless and trifling they are. They won't work. We allow them ground enough around their houses for a garden, but they won't plant it. They will work only enough to keep from starvation. Some of them won't do even that much. They get trusted for all they can get, and when they can't get any more out of us, they move back to the mountains, leaving in debt."

He presented so strongly that phase of child labor and worthless parent-hood which is seen by the superficial observer that I paused. For a moment I wondered whether, after all my months of labor and patient effort to ascertain the true conditions, my deductions were wrong. A stauncher opponent of the employment of the child, those special interests that oppose his employment could not have had, and he a practical mill man too. The child should be in school, and the parent made to work, was his plaint.

We had gone back to his office and I was standing at his desk, as he took his seat, when suddenly turning to me, he demanded to see my credentials. As hitherto I had no use for

them, I had laid them aside, and not having them with me, I felt for the moment embarrassed. Then a sudden thought occurred to me.

His view-point was so foreign to the conditions existing in the sections of country I had been over, where they have neither asylums, poorhouses, town meetings or anything else in the nature of adequate provision for the care and betterment of the very poor and ignorant, even to the extent that the voice of the people in Governmental affairs is reduced to mere nothing, I surmised that he did not belong to any part of that country. Besides, everywhere I had been, the simple statement by me that I was a Government agent was sufficient. No one thought of asking me for any proof of the matter. My word was enough. As these thoughts flashed through my mind, I divined that he was from the North and so I asked him where he was from.

He replied by naming a New England factory village within a few miles of my own home-town, and I laughed. With a desire to rub it in a little, I answered his puzzled look of inquiry with a remark to the effect that only a Yankee would ask to see my credentials, and as for knowing anything about the poor people whom he had been condemning for their ignorance and poverty, he knew nothing about them at all.

It was his turn to feel embarrassed, and with natural perversity perhaps, I told him plainly what I thought about the whole matter. He did not appear to have a word to say in reply until the situation was relieved by the appearance of another man, whom he at once introduced to me as the Superintendent.

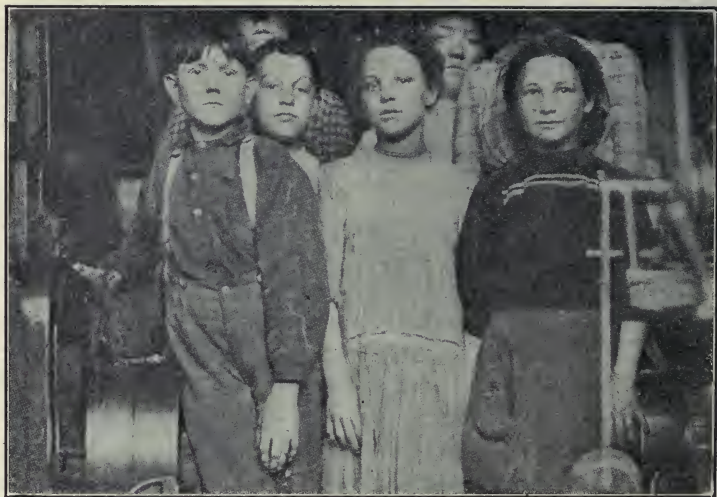
He was a broad shouldered, rather handsome looking man, and learning that I was a Government agent sent out to investigate child labor, he began sailing into me about as I had sailed into his assistant.

"Do you see anything the matter with me?" he asked. "Do I look as if I had hook-worm? Does my growth look as if it had been stunted by working in a cotton-mill? Do I look

sickly from breathing the moist lint-laden atmosphere twelve hours a day?"

As I humbly replied that I did not see anything the matter with him, he continued,

"Now let me tell you something. My father and mother were poor folks in the mountains of Georgia. They went to a cotton-mill when quite young. They worked in a cotton-



AS THEY APPEAR IN THE MILLS

An actual picture taken in Tennessee, and reproduced from one of the publications of those special interests that live by agitating reforms. Compare the faces and physique of these children with those who do no work.

mill; they got acquainted in a cotton-mill, and were married at the cotton-mill. I was born at a cotton-mill, and I went to work in a cotton-mill when I was so small I can't remember how big I was. I have been working in a cotton-mill ever since, and to-day I am one of the highest paid mill-superintendents in the South. That is what working in a cotton-mill has done for me."

He did not ask to see my credentials, but said,

"Come, I will show you my mill," and he took me into the

finest mill I had ever seen. There were sixty thousand spindles there. Sixty thousand educators for the poor children of the mountains, until the Legislature of Tennessee, listening to the agitation and misrepresentations of those special interests which live by agitating reforms, decreed that the child should not work, with the result that children of a decadent people were legislated back to their mountain homes of squalor, ignorance and vice, or out upon the streets to beg and to become criminals, or, as in the case of many young girls, to a worse fate.

The superintendent endeavored to emphasize the fact that the mill did not always get the worst element from the rural districts, but endeavored to get the best. Of course the worst would come, as it was only the poor who would leave their mountain homes for the cotton-mill. His own parents were poor, he said, and the only education he ever had was that obtained at the cotton-mill. His parents had no money with which to educate him, and they needed his earnings, and so he had to work. "But," said he, "it was the best education I could have had."

"It is a simple matter of evolution," he added by way of summing up. "My father and mother never got any further advanced than the weave-room, but I learned cotton spinning and weaving from start to finish. It is my profession, and it brings me a good income. Now I have a son who is about to graduate from the University of Tennessee. I have given him an education and I have sufficient capital to give him a start. But what would I have done with a university education, I the son of a couple of poor weavers?"

He took me to another part of the mill village, and there pointed out to me a scene entirely different from the one of squalor and poverty shown me by his assistant. There were trim houses with well-kept yards, and growing vines and flowers. Houses were pointed out that had been bought and paid for by families who had come down from the mountains just as poor as those others, living in slothful idleness on the

other side of the mill. But whatever inherent tendencies to idleness these had had, they had the vigor and stamina to overcome them, and to work and improve, taking advantage of the opportunities presented to them by their employment in the cotton-mill.

It was an unanswerable object-lesson. There were the homes, many of them paid for, all neatly kept and maintained by the workers, many of whom began as children in the great mill. No doubt the fathers of many of them had, in their day,



AN ENTIRELY DIFFERENT SCENE FROM SQUALOR AND POVERTY

spent their time sitting on shoe-boxes whittling, and some of the old mothers were like those I have described elsewhere as sitting listlessly with their chins in their hands, a narcotic weed in their mouths to satisfy their abnormal cravings. But now in the place of such people, was another generation living decently, well clothed and well fed, with good homes, and, in many instances, money in the bank. Yet the new law, inspired by professional agitators, said to the children of those situated as these once were

“Thou shalt not toil.”

That this was true, I had other startling and unexpected proof a few months later. I was riding with a companion down a mountain trail close to the North Carolina line, many miles from Knoxville. The district was one of those notoriously bad ones, distinguished for lawlessness, whiskey making and whiskey drinking. A few years ago a Chinaman had been murdered there for his money; his head split open with an axe, his body was subsequently found hidden behind a log, and though several arrests were made for the crime, rumor in the neighborhood said the deed was actually done by an old woman.

We had ridden over the mountain down Wolf Creek, passing scattered cabins along the trail and on the mountain-sides. Wherever there was a group of children, they would scurry away like a flock of chickens to the mother hen. As we approached the foot of the mountain, we observed a rude board shack, and there instead of children running away from us, were four, five, six, seven, coming toward us as hard as they could run. The biggest one first, with a baby in her arms, and stringing out behind were the others, the littlest one stumbling along at the end of the line, presenting a comical sight. They evidently recognized us as friends. Feeling in my pocket, as the eldest one came up, I said,

"How many are you, little girl?"

"We are seven, sir," came the reply in the gentlest of voices.

I counted out seven nickels which I gave them in turn, and to which gift each said,

"Thank you, sir," down to the lisping little shock-headed one, and when it came to the baby's turn, its little mother said,

"Say, thank you, sir."

It occurring to me that my companion had been wishing for something to eat, if only a piece of corn-bread, I said to the oldest one.

"Haven't you got something to eat? This friend of mine is hungry."

"Yes, sir," she replied, "come right into the house. You can have some of our dinner, sir."

We followed her into the shack, called a house. There was a stove in one corner of a room partitioned off at one end. A table, a bench and two chairs, took up nearly all the remaining floor space. On the table was a jug with the entire top broken off. Over it buzzed a myriad of flies, and in the bottom of it were more flies, some of them squirming and some already drowned.

The children following us in as far as they could get, one of the little girls took from the stove a frying-pan of potatoes, and emptying it into a cracked dish, placed the potatoes on the table. Then taking from the oven a pone of corn-bread, she placed it by the side of the potatoes, as the elder girl invited us to eat.

I asked her where their parents were, and she said they had gone eight miles to town in search of work. Her mother thought she could get some washing and scrubbing to do, and her father was going to haul tan bark, she said.

Seeing a school-book lying on a shelf near by, I asked her if she could read.

"Not much, sir," she replied, "but the twins can read quite well," and she cast a glance at her two younger sisters indicating that they were the twins.

"How does that happen that your younger sisters can read better than you?" I asked.

"They learned down at the cotton-mill," came the reply.

"Cotton-mill!" I exclaimed, for cotton-mill children in these lonely mountain woods were far from any thoughts of mine.

"Yes," said she, "we were down at the cotton-mill at Knoxville, ten months, and the twins learned to read down there."

That accounted for their not being afraid; for their running to greet us as friends; for their superior manners, and no doubt for their brightness too. All this the result of only ten months at the despised cotton-mill!

"And why didn't you stay at the mill?" I asked.



THE LAW SAID TO THEM "THOU SHALT NOT WORK!"

Seven bright, attractive little children. They sang the praises of the cotton-mill where they had a nice home, dressed well and had plenty to eat, but the law sent them back to their mountain home of poverty, isolation and ignorance.

"They made a law that children should not work," she said, "and so they sent us out. Papa couldn't make enough for us all, so we had to come back here."

"But you had to work down there."

"Yes sir, but it was better than being up here."

"Didn't you get awfully tired working in the mill?"

"We did at first, sir, but not after the first few days. I do wish we were back. We had such good clothes to wear, and such good things to eat, and there were so many things to see and learn, while here there is nothing—nothing at all, sir."

Turning to the little boy, I said,

"Didn't you get awfully tired in the mill?"

"Naw," came the strutting reply, his hands in his pockets and shoulders thrown back, proud of his suspenders and mill cap, "I played most of the time."

"Do you mean to tell me that they paid you to play?"

"Yeas," drawled he with an emphatic inclination of his head, "they paid me three dollars a week to doff, an' I had to doff only a couple times a day. They let me play the rest o' the time."

And then those children together sang the praises of the cotton-mill. They told of the nice house they lived in, of the Sunday school and church, and how they dressed and were like folks of quality. And then too, there was the vegetable wagon that came up on the hill with fruits and vegetables every day.

"Yer oughter see!" exclaimed the little boy, his eyes sparkling at the thoughts. "Them watermelons!"

"Poor children," I thought, and it occurring to me to take a photograph of them, I placed them in a row at the back of the shack, and snapped my camera at them. Then the little mother said,

"We had our picture taken at the cotton-mill. Don't you want to see it, sir?"

I certainly did. Turning to one of the twins, in her gentle voice she said,



THE SAME CHILDREN AT THE COTTON-MILL.

The four elder children had jobs at which the boy said he played most of the time. There they were well clothed, well housed and well fed, but the law sent them back to be reared midst misery, squalor and vice.

"Go and get it, dear."

A discarded flour sack partially filled with trumpery was fetched from the shack. Groping in the bottom of it, like in a grab bag, the little girl brought forth the photograph, and there were the happy faces of those children, with their father and mother, and a relative, as they were, a united and happy family at the cotton-mill.

There was the story told on that bit of pasteboard. It needed no argument. Bright faces, good clothes, shoes and stockings, and a warm house to live in. These were the children at the mill to whom the law had said,

"Thou shalt not toil," and as a consequence had driven them back to their miserable abode of hunger, ignorance and squalor.

The last words of those little children gathered there as we mounted our horses, rang in my ears.

"Oh, kind sir, can't you do something to have the law changed so we can go back to the cotton-mill?"

"What a shame!" exclaimed my companion, looking back at them as we rode away; "it won't be long before some trifling fellow comes along and takes the eldest one and she will be like all the rest."

Desirous of having the photograph, I sent for it when the father and mother were at home, and I got the mother's story of their experience at the mill. She said that her husband earned one dollar a day, and the four elder children, after working a week or so to learn, were paid fifty cents a day each, making their total income eighteen dollars a week. Their expenditures were one dollar and seventy-five cents per week for house rent; one dollar and twenty-five cents per week for fuel, and seven dollars per week for rations, leaving eight dollars per week for clothing, incidentals and savings.

At the mill, the mother said, they lived in a well built, comfortable, three room house. They had everything they wanted to eat with fresh meat and vegetables whenever they wanted them, while at their mountain home they lived chiefly on a

diet of fat pork and corn meal the year round. At the mill they were able to buy good clothes and shoes for the children, while on the farm they were unable to do so. The children had good health at the mill, and they never would have returned to their mountain farm, had it not been for the law which prohibited the children working. As it was, they got into the mill by the merest chance. The mother declared that she thought it a great wrong to legislate her children out of the mill, for there she was able to take care of them and bring them up as they should be, whereas on the mountain farm she was obliged to see them grow up in idleness and ignorance, and half clothed and hungry at that. Work as hard as she and her husband could, she said, they could not keep out of debt. Nor could they provide proper clothing and food for their children. As for their going to school, all that was useless. Suppose they did learn to read; in the mountains they had neither books or papers to read.

CHAPTER XX.

SOME CONDITIONS IN EAST TENNESSEE.

THAT conditions differ greatly on the Tennessee side of the mountains is evident almost immediately upon entering that State. Following the French Broad River through Paint Gap by rail, the valleys broadened out, and extensive fields of grain, farms and farm-houses greet one's view. On the other hand there are miserable types of humanity gathered around the railway stations, and sometimes on the train, presenting a marked contrast to the well set up, business-like men who have occupations. The difference between these two extremes of people are much more marked than in the mountains of North Carolina.

In my conversation with the better class, I found no attempt to hide or deny the existence of the other class, as in the latter State. One of the first men I interviewed, a wholesale merchant at Morristown, said that he thought one of the grave problems that confronted the people was what to do with the large number of non-producers hanging around on the outskirts of the towns and villages, and on the farms and in the cities. While these people had families, they would hardly do enough work to support them. Some went to the cotton-mills, but the most worthless ones were soon back in their old haunts. There was a vagrancy law under which they could be arrested and jailed, for not having any visible means of support, but the law was seldom made effective.

At the little hotels at which I stopped in Tennessee, I was at once impressed with the care taken to lock the doors at night. Coming from a section of the country where this pre-

caution was scarcely ever observed, I inquired the reason for the difference, and was told that it was because burglary in North Carolina is a capital offense.

At Knoxville, after my visit to the cotton-mill, I interviewed a revenue officer who had spent some fifteen years running down moonshiners, murderers and other criminals in the mountains. While conditions differed in different localities, he said, he believed that there were certain general characteristics shared by nearly all the people living in the mountain districts. The poorest of them were ignorant, lawless and immoral. They were intemperate in their habits, usually drinking to excess when they could get anything to drink, profane in their language and obscene. They cared very little for their families, and when under the influence of liquor were particularly bloodthirsty and reckless, often deliberately hunting up someone with whom to quarrel, and then a killing would frequently take place. The greatest time for these killing scrapes was around Christmas when all means would be exhausted to procure liquor with which to celebrate, and then knifing, shooting and murder would follow.

With respect to the effect of factory employment on those who went to the cotton-mills, he was most emphatic. He had no connection with a cotton-mill and therefore the claim could not be set up that he was biased because of any interest in cotton-mills. He believed that the influence surrounding the cotton-mills was better for the employed, but the great trouble was to get the poorer people in the rural districts to go and remain at the mills, where they were amenable to the laws and subject to restraint. Touching upon the general immorality of the poor in the rural districts, he said that when a young girl fell from virtue, she was neither disgraced nor an outcast; but at a cotton-mill she was soon brought to face the fact that a girl falling from grace would be ostracized by her companions and associates. While there were some mills where the conditions were not altogether ideal, their tendency generally, was one of betterment.

With respect to visiting some of the localities of which he spoke, he said a good trip for me would be in the Chilhowee Mountains to Chestnut Flats, but as a precaution, he advised me to put some pieces of rock in my saddle-bags and pretend to be looking for minerals, otherwise I might be taken for a revenue officer, and something might happen to me.

An interview with another officer was corroborative of the testimony presented by the first. When I asked him where I could go to see some of the conditions for myself, he exclaimed,

"Oh, you needn't go far. Go right over into the Tenth District of Sevier County, and you will find men there still wearing long hunting-shirts. Or you can go up to Chestnut Flats in the Chilhowee Mountains, and hunt up old man Birchfield." As he mentioned the name Birchfield, he turned to one of his clerks, and they both laughed.

"I don't believe you will get to see him," he added. "He set a bear-trap for us a while back, and I reckon it ain't safe for any of us up there just now."

The reference to the old man trying to catch a revenue officer in his bear-trap interested me greatly, and so did that of the men who still wore the hunting-shirts of their forefathers. The officer gave me traveling directions to both places, and repeated the advice of the other officer to put some rocks in my saddle-bags in order to carry out the pretense of looking for minerals.

A painful and debilitating malady brought on by a rough diet and mode of life differing from my regular habits, decided me not to attempt a horseback journey into the "Tenth Deestricht," as the revenue officer called it, but I could scarcely resist the call of the Chilhowee Mountains, and the story of old man Birchfield's bear-trap. The railroad would carry me to within a comparatively short distance of the mountains, and at the railroad terminus I could decide upon the advisability of continuing the journey farther.

Following the directions of the officer, I left the train from Knoxville at a sign board painted "Tuscaleechee," and cross-

ing a narrow foot bridge suspended over a river, I meandered through a fringe of trees bordering the river until I came to an open field on the far side of which, set against a ridge of hills, was the farm-house I was looking for.

To the rear of the house I encountered a woman with bearing and manners of education and refinement. She wore a black dress of good material, evidently cut and fitted with dressmaker's skill, but worn and frayed, and covered with grease-spots. Receiving me with the air of a town-bred lady, she invited me to be seated on the porch as she finished carrying buckets of water upstairs for her son's Sunday-morning bath. Although young in appearance, she was the mother of ten children, several unwashed specimens of which, hung around the porch.

I explained that I was desirous of engaging a horse for a contemplated trip into the Chilhowee Mountains, and she calling up to her son, he answered back that I could have use of the blind horse as the other horse he wanted to use himself. After a while the son came down smoking a cigarette, an emaciated-appearing youth, very different from the sturdy sons of mountain yeomanry that had impressed me so favorably in the mountains of North Carolina. It was eleven o'clock, almost too late for a sick man to set out on a horse-back journey into a strange country, and besides, I was not partial to riding a blind horse.

I accepted an invitation to breakfast, which followed shortly, the mother appearing at the table with her toilet made, and her younger children hastily washed and their gowns changed. She carried on a conversation in that low, soft intonation so characteristic of the Southern lady, but she was vivacious and voluble. She explained that her husband was away on a trip, and was not expected to return for a day or two.

After breakfast the young man invited me to drive with him over to Townsend, the terminus of the railroad, which invitation I gladly accepted. As we rode along he explained, as a reason for coming down so late, that he ran a pool-room

in Townsend that prevented his returning home until after midnight. I observed that he was armed with an automatic pistol, and in referring to the occupants of the different houses we passed, he spoke of them with contempt. He said that his pool-room arrangement was only a temporary affair, and that he wanted to get out of the country, if for no other reason than that the people generally were so vile and mean.

Townsend proved to be a mere collection of white framed houses with a store or two and a large lumber plant. I obtained a room, very pleasant and home-like, in the inn or boarding-house, where I remained several days greatly debilitated by my illness; but I put in the interim profitably by securing several interviews respecting rural conditions. It was evident that there was a well-defined chasm between two classes of people in that part of the country, and the evidence obtained from those belonging to the class I interviewed was practically the same. No excuse, no defense, no palliation was made for the conditions said to exist. They were bad, and in many instances unspeakable.

Shortly after being assigned to my room, which contained two beds, the inn-keeper brought in a young man carrying a suitcase, whom, he said, he would be obliged to put in the room with me, for he had no other place for him. The young man said his name was Silas Thomas. He represented himself as having come from a place in the mountains called Tellico Plains, and that he was seeking work in some one of the lumber camps around Townsend. While he was a well-built young man, he did not look like a lumberman, and not until I informed him that I was a Government agent seeking information about conditions in the country did he show any inclination to be at all communicative. He then lost his reserved manner and talked freely, and his revelations, if true, were enough to condemn the people he mentioned, as barbarians, without even those little touches of pride and self esteem that barbarians usually have.

Among a number of specific examples of lawlessness and

depravity related, was one in which figured several brothers known as the Hayden boys who lived over the Tennessee line in Georgia. One of these Haydens had eventually killed two of his own brothers. A Sheriff having determined to put an end to his lawless career, recently went after him with an armed posse, following him into Polk County, Tennessee, where he had sought refuge. There the Sheriff came upon him running an illicit still, and shot him and another dead, seriously wounding a third.

The son of the farmer, in driving me over from Tuscalochee, had given me a version of this affair in which he stigmatized the killing of the two "blockaders" as unwarranted on the part of the Sheriff and his posse, but my roommate assured me that this was not so. He said the two outlaws were not only armed but had an armed sentry guarding the place where they had the still, and he fired upon the Sheriff first. He intimated further that it was a good way to rid the country of such people, for when they were arrested and brought to trial, justice was rarely meted out to them as deserved. Even when sentenced to a long term of imprisonment, they were usually pardoned within a year or two by the Governor, whereupon they would go right back to their old haunts and habits.¹

He declared further that this class of country or mountain people were not only lawless, but they would not work, no matter how good a job was offered them. They would steal, but they usually confined their stealing to something to eat. The representative heads of the best families guarded the intermingling of their children with those whom they considered

¹ Governor Patterson during his four years' administration, made 1225 pardons and commutations, nearly all of them absolute pardons, however. Governor Blease of South Carolina, in the first eleven months of his administration, pardoned and paroled 325 prisoners. Governor Hadley of Missouri, is authority for the statement that there are more convicts in the Missouri penitentiaries than in any other prison in the world and about one half of the 2200 are under twenty-five years of age. More than 600 are under 22 years. Yet our reformers and agitators, decry the very labor and industry that would keep fully 90 per cent of these convicts out of prison, and if taught an industry early enough, would prevent them becoming criminals.

their inferiors most jealously. As illustrative of this, he told of a family feud which was due to a young man home from school running off with a fourteen-year-old girl who was considered much his inferior socially, which resulted in the killing of five men and the wounding of several others. The story of this feud alone, which is historical in East Tennessee,



NOT ONLY LAWLESS BUT LAZY

He declared that they would not work, no matter how good a job was offered them.

embracing a series of murders, closed with a sort of pot-boiling of immorality, social depravity, inconstancy and treachery, scarcely to be credited in this civilized age.

Before I left Townsend the innkeeper asked me what I thought of the man whom he had given me as a room-mate. As I replied that he seemed to be all right, he said,

"Yes, I reckon he's all right, but he ain't just what he's

pretendin' to be. He says he's lookin' for a job, an' he goes up to the lumber camps every mornin' an' he don't git no job. I tell you what I think 'bout it." And lowering his voice he added, "he don't want no job. He's a detective. He's jes' mousin' aroun' the lumber camps lookin' for someone what's murdered someone or somethin'. He ain't got nuthin' in thet suitcase o' hisen either, 'cause I hefted it. I tell you, he can't fool me."

The innkeeper told me further, that he was from the mountains of Virginia, and that he knew the conditions of the poor people all the way down into Tennessee. Asked for his opinion respecting these people taking their children to work in the cotton-mills, he said,

"Anyone who ever seen them chil'ren in the mountain as I hev' seen 'em, wouldn't say nuthin' 'bout them workin' in the cotton-mills. I tell yer Mister, I hev' seen them poor things livin' on berries in the summer time like bears, an' in the winter they got nothin' but corn-meal, an' how they keep from freezin' ter death in them cabins o' theirs is a mystery. Cotton-mills, Mister! Why, thar' ain't enough cotton-mills to take care o' them poor chil'ren what's in our mountains. If thar only war, an' they could get them chil'ren to 'em, it would be the greates' thing in the world fer 'em."

With a half-hearted determination to try to make the journey into the Chilhowee Mountains, which seemed to have such an attraction for me, and unable to obtain a horse at Townsend, I walked back to the farm-house at Tuscaleechee. I found the farmer had returned. He was seated with his wife on the front porch, she giving him a hair cut while he occasionally directed words of encouragement or admonition to his two small boys, who sporadically made frantic attempts to chop down the last year's corn-stalks still standing in the field in front of the house.

The wife was soon engaged in conversation with me, relating many of the deplorable conditions among the poor and indigent people with whom she was acquainted. Their in-

digence, she said, was due solely to their laziness and lack of ambition. She made no attempt to minimize the conditions or exculpate them, but condemned them scathingly, giving names of families living on her husband's property, showing a most astounding degree of degradation, immorality and vice. Marriage relations were entered into merely as a protective measure to comply with laws regulating the conjugal state, the marriage vows being disregarded often in their entirety. Man



A CHILD OF THE MOUNTAINS

In the summer they live on berries like bears; in the winter they get nothing but corn meal. "Thar ain't enough cotton-mills for them."

and wife, the husband and the mother were equally immoral and indolent, preferring the slothful monotony of their miserable abodes, wherever or whatever they might be, to exerting themselves sufficiently to obtain something better.

She told how she had visited such families and had seen the mother sitting in the midst of her children without a particle of food in the cabin. The father appearing with a peck of corn-meal, some pork and coffee, the indolent mother would get up fairly dragging herself along, and would prepare the

meal for the children by mixing it with cold water and baking it. The children would ravenously devour the chunks of hot, barely-cooked dough, and drink the muddy decoction of cheap coffee without sugar or milk, as if they were literally starved. Yet the children of these families would not work either. She herself had offered them all the beans and peas they could pick on shares, but they would pick only enough to supply their immediate wants. One of the tenants on their farm had been heard to boast recently that he could earn enough money at one of the sawmills or lumber camps, in one day, to buy enough rations to keep his family a week, and he did not see why he should do any more work than was necessary for that. They would not buy a few cents' worth of kerosene for light at night, she said, but would use pine knots, or go to bed by the light from a fire in the fireplace. Their chief delight was an old banjo which some member of the family, usually the father or eldest son, would pick while the other members of the family sat around, too lazy even to dance.

The lady referred to one family in particular, the eldest daughter of which she had taken into her own home and tried to teach housework, but she was lazy and without a spark of ambition. She preferred the squalor and even hunger of her rude cabin to the better food and surroundings of the lady's home.

In answer to my inquiry why the owners of the land allowed such people to live on it, her husband replied that labor was very scarce on the farms, and as the farmers stood a chance of getting an occasional day's work out of them, they had to put up with them and do the best they could. He acquiesced in the statements of his wife respecting their social and moral degradation. It was due to such conditions among them that the "White Caps" were organized in the adjoining county of Sevier, they said. A circuit judge at the county-seat, after hearing several cases of a grossly immoral nature, in which the prosecution failed completely, declared that it seemed out of the question to remedy such a disgraceful state

of affairs through the courts, and consequently it was incumbent upon every self-respecting citizen to take the remedy into his own hands. These remarks were interpreted to mean the organization of a law-and-order league—hence the “White Caps.”

The farmer and his wife both believed that the “White Caps” were organized for a good purpose. They began by riding over the country at night, warning those who were living flagrantly immoral and indecent lives that they must mend their ways or suffer the consequences. If the warnings were not heeded, the offenders were taken out under cover of darkness and whipped, regardless of sex. The punishments increased, and, as usually happens in the case of such organizations, they were not confined to restrictive measures among the immoral and degraded, but, through motives of personal spite and revenge, were inflicted upon others, and atrocities were committed. At length a murder occurred of such a nature that the entire country was aroused. The machinery of the State was appealed to, suspects were arrested, and finally, through confessions, the guilty leaders were run down, among them being a prominent citizen who was tried, convicted and hanged.

While, according to the lady’s testimony, the condition of the poor was most deplorable, she said it was not as bad as formerly. She remembered when there were families wandering around the country who led a vagabond life without even pretending to have a permanent home. They tramped through the country, seeking shelter in churches, school-houses and abandoned cabins in inclement weather, and at other times they camped out by the road-side. They would beg and steal, and do anything else imaginable rather than work, but they were gradually disappearing, she thought.

To my question if she knew anything about the cotton-mills, and their effect upon the families who went to them from the farms, she expressed an unfavorable opinion, saying that the mills must be awfully close and confining, and she had read

of their injurious effect upon those who worked in them, especially upon the women and children. She had never been in a cotton-mill herself, and she certainly would not want to work in one, she said. Then she mentioned a family of Fergusons who had just returned from the mills. She said they belonged to the indigent class. There were ten children in the family who had lived around on land as tenants, the old man occasionally doing a day's work for fifty cents. The children were insufficiently clothed and fed, and never attended school. Finally they had gone off to Knoxville where the children got work in the cotton-mill, and now the old man was back on the farm with five of them. The others had remained at the mill. They wouldn't come back. Three of the girls had married at the mill, and two of them were said to be doing well, but the other one had married a "no account fellow," and she had returned with the rest of the family.

"And now what are they going to do?" I asked.

"Well, the old man seems to have some money," she replied, "and he has rented twenty acres of land for which he has paid cash, and with his two boys and three girls, who returned with him, he is going to put in a crop."

"It seems to me that this family has bettered itself by going to the cotton-mill," I said.

"Why yes," was the reply, "I never thought of the cotton-mills in that light before. Fergerson has certainly got a start by taking his children to work in one of them."

And as this view of the matter seemed to occur to her for the first time, she named a number of other families who had left the farm for the cotton-mills, and after a careful analysis of their circumstances agreed that they were much better off where they had become regular wage-earners at the mills, even if the atmosphere, as she had read, was close and confining.

The evening was passed sitting by the log fire in the fireplace, and then the father unburdened himself to me.

"That boy of mine is worrying me," said he, referring to the young man whom I had first seen strolling downstairs at

eleven o'clock in the morning, smoking a cigarette. "I have spent a good deal of money to educate him. It cost me five hundred dollars the last time I sent him off to college, and now all he seems to be good for is to run a pool-room at Townsend, where he is liable to get into serious trouble with the rough element there. I have a good piece of farm property here, and it would produce a good income if he would only help me with it, but he won't work. He says the work is too hard."

"I have about concluded," said the old man finally, "that it is a mistake to send children off to school to be educated. When they get their education they are not good for much of anything. They don't want to stay at home and work. They want to dress up and sport around, and if they have to work they are always looking for something easy."

CHAPTER XXI.

THE CHILHOWEE MOUNTAINS.

It is said that the Tennessee farmer gets up at four o'clock and sits around waiting for daylight. My farmer certainly got up early, but he explained that it was customary to get up early to feed the stock to be ready for the day's work, although I did not see any one work.

The day dawned bright and glorious. As I looked over the cheerful landscape, I decided to take the good horse the farmer seemed anxious to let me have at the price he asked, and investigate old man Birchfield and his bear-trap in the Chilhowee Mountains.

But, oh, that horse ! The farmer said he was Kentucky bred. On the British frontier, in my old Central American days, when we got hold of such a gaited horse, we used to say, "Send him down to the English ; only an Englishman would ride such a horse."

I was tempted to ride back after riding across the valley, but the budding trees, the woods and the fragrant air were enough to make a sick man well, so I journeyed on, my elephant of a horse fairly pounding his way, and me too, along the road towards a range of mountains, which we soon reached. Up the mountain I went, into the woods, in the midst of which I paused at a country store, wondering whence the storekeeper got his trade.

Near the top of the mountain I came to a man leaning over a crooked fence, squirting tobacco juice at flies and bugs and things. On a grassy knoll back of him was a dilapidated cabin with no sign of life around it, making a picture like something, it seemed to me, I had seen in books.

"What place is this?" I asked.

"El Doyrahdó," drawled the man, deluging a fly on one of the fence rails with a well-directed discharge of juice.

"Must have had a gold mine here," said I, "to have such a name."

"Thet's what they said, suh! Got me hyar watchin' et, but I hain't never seed no gold. They got a mighty big hole down



A TYPICAL CABIN IN THE WOODS

Where "they hev families livin' in 'em like rabbits. Any path'll lead you to somebody's house.

thar in the ground, an' then stopped diggin'. Reckon they spent pretty much all their money in that hole. Don't know if they're goin' ter come back an' dig some more or not."

"Does any one live around here?" I asked.

"Yes, suh, the woods hev families livin' in 'em like rabbits. Any path'll lead you to somebody's house."

"Do you get any whiskey here?"

"Not much since the officers has been raidin' the country as they hev. An' then them what makes it, don't make it any

good no mor'. They put lye in it, and it is enough to kill yer. They oughter be killed fer makin' the stuff."

Leaving the man, I crossed the mountain down to Cades Cove, one of those little worlds between mountain ranges, unto themselves. The people had been described to me as quite different from others. There were children among them who had never seen a ceiled room or a flight of stairs, it was said, and mothers still spun and wove the material for their clothing. Riding down the mountain, a plain appeared stretched below, hemmed in by another mountain, and cut up into farms with fences. The houses, while built of plain boards, appeared to have been erected with some skill, and those that I passed were all on the same plan, two rooms, a porch in front, and a kitchen tacked on in the rear. A spinning-wheel on one of the porches presented evidence that spinning was not a lost art. A barn stuffed with hay, from one of the sides of which it was fairly bursting, denoted unusual thrift, while a group of children in one of the lanes seemed to be taking some interest in life. They regarded me with curiosity.

Passing through the valley, I threaded my way through a thicket and then plunged into a forest of primeval aspect. After riding several miles, I suddenly entered a basin-like cove with a picturesque setting of cabins around it, like on the edge of a basin. While the cabins had every appearance of being occupied there, was not a soul to be seen anywhere. Following the most plainly-marked trail, I soon found that it doubled back in the direction I had come. Returning to the basin again, I succeeded in finding another which continued through the woods, which I judged to be the right one.

I rode on through more woods for an hour or two. Suddenly a great new cabin loomed up before me on a barren hill-side with the hot sun beating down. The cabin was chinked with bright yellow clay. It was without windows and had two doors directly opposite each other in its two sides. A bevy of tangled-haired children, upon hearing my horse's iron-shod hoofs beat upon the stones, looked up, and seeing

me, ran into the cavern-like structure from which a gaunt, forbidding-looking woman appeared in the doorway.

Passing on, my trail took me along the side of a mountain with a steep field cleared for planting, but strewn with so many flat, slab-like rocks, giving it such a desolate, graveyard-like aspect, it did not seem capable of growing anything. Leaving the barren mountain-side, I came to a more level field where glittering in the sun, was a rural free delivery mail box, an unexpected sight, and the only one I had seen in all that journey.

A pair of bars admitted me to a stone-slabbed field with apple-trees in it and a rude barn, beyond which rose a cabin made of great hewn logs. There was a new window-frame and a glazed window in the end of the cabin, through which I discerned the face of a man with a long, gray beard, peering out. As he came to the door, I announced that I had come to pay him a visit as he was the chief citizen of Chestnut Flats, and could furnish the Government, whose agent I was, with valuable information concerning the poor people in his neighborhood.

"My God! You'll find 'em poor 'nough 'round here," he said. "'Light, and I'll put your horse up."

I followed him to the barn where I pulled the saddle off the horse while he measured out his corn. He then took me into his cabin giving me a seat by the fireplace, although there was no fire or need of any on that glorious half-summer day. As he tapped his snuff-box, taking a pinch of snuff, the first time I had seen it used in that way since my grandfather's day, a young woman appeared and invited me in to dinner.

"Go in and get your dinner," said the old man. "We've had ourn."

Gladly doing as I was bid, I entered the cabin dining-room, where I sat down to a table supplied with a great dish of pork and greens, with boiled potatoes, hot biscuit, corn-bread and boiled dried-apples. I enjoyed the meal immensely as the young woman acting as hostess appeared most eager to please

me. Her hair was combed and arranged with artful skill. Her form was shapely, and she was bright and vivacious. I wondered at her life in those lonely mountains. She proved to be the old man's daughter, who having married a lout of the neighborhood, had divorced him. Even in this remote region this striking feature of our civilization was to be found.

I asked her about old man Birchfield, and the raid upon his



THE CHIEF CITIZEN OF THE CHILHOWEE MOUNTAINS

"My God ! You'll find 'em poor 'nough 'round here," he said.

still. She called him uncle, saying the revenue officers had taken a mean advantage of their hospitality, for they had given them a dance and a good time generally, some time previously. Then to sneak up on to old Uncle Birchfield's still wasn't right.

Again joining the old man by the fireplace, he finished the story about Uncle Birchfield's bear-trap and the revenue officers.

"He sot the bear-trap all right," said he, "an' the wonder

is, one of 'em officers didn't get caught. But Uncle Birchfield hed put a lock on the door of the still house, an' they went down through the roof, or one of 'em would have got caught sure."

Then he added, commentingly,

"They needn't hev burned up the ole man's cabin, his hog meat an' everything he had. God knows folks are poor enough in these parts, an' Uncle Birchfield didn't make fifty cents' worth of liquor nohow. I used to make it myself, plenty on it outer my apples. I couldn't do nothin' else with 'em, an' no one minded makin' liquor in them days, but folks got so devilish mean, an' got to drinkin' it so, I jes' gave it up.

"The people in these parts are devilish mean, anyhow," the old man continued, "an' they don't know nothin'. It's 'bout the same as in all the mountain country down through Kentucky, into Georgia. There ain't no schools an' if they hev' them, the children won't go. My ole army chaplain and me put 'em up a school-house an' church in here, and they were so devilish mean, they shot it full of holes an' ran the preacher off.

"You can't do anything with 'em. They are the most lyin', thievin', treacherous people God ever made. They don't want to learn nothin', an' as long as they can raise enough corn for their meal, an' steal a hog or two for their meat, they are satisfied.

"Don't they own their own land?" I asked.

"Own nothin'!" he exclaimed. "They jes' live in their ole cabins on the land they hev allus lived on, an' they don't think nobody has any rights but theirselves." And reaching up to the beams over his head he took down a roll and spread out the blue print of a map.

"There," said he, pointing to a little angular diagram in the midst of a survey, "that's my piece of land, an' the only one owned outside of the company's that owns all the rest."

"How would it do to buy up some of this land and give it to the poor people living upon it?" I asked.

"What would you want to do that for? The land would do them no more good then than it does now. It 'tain't worth nothin'. They couldn't make any more of a livin' on it than they do now."

"Do you know anything about the cotton-mills?" I asked.

"Nothin' more than what I read in my paper. They say they are unhealthy. Somethin' 'bout 'em that stuffs up the lungs of 'em that has to work in 'em."

"Does anyone ever go from here to the mills?"

"There was Laura Hughes and Mandy Cooper. They went."

"Do you think they bettered their circumstances by going?"

"My God!" he exclaimed, "they couldn't hev' worsted 'em. There was Mandy livin' over here in a cabin with her mother an' brothers who would do no work. Mandy an' her mother hed to do all the ploughin' while the boys loafed 'round. Old man Hughes, Laura's father, was sent to prison for killin' a man, an' when he got out he skinned my apple-trees for 'pearin' agin' him. But I fixed him. I saved my apple-trees all right."

While the old man was most pessimistic respecting the conditions of the people, all of whom were his relatives and neighbors, I found him decidedly interesting. He knew who his ancestors were for several generations, and he told how his grandfather had settled in Cades Cove, where his own boyhood days were spent, and whence he had gone off into the Federal army during the civil war and there got all the education he ever had. He exhibited the rifle owned by his grandfather, and, pointing to the name "Baxter Bean" on the barrel, said, "Baxter Bean made it," and he was the grandson of the first white settler in Tennessee. He settled in what is now Johnson County, next to Mitchell, North Carolina, from whence the old man said, his grandfather emigrated into this part of Tennessee, bringing the old rifle with

him. I subsequently learned that there are Birchfields still living in Mitchell County near the Tennessee line, and that the reputation of some of them is not altogether a savory one.

The old man said he would gladly keep me over night, but his corn was nearly all gone, and he couldn't possibly spare any for my horse. So I saddled up, and as I was preparing to leave, a sheriff, booted and spurred, rode up with an armed posse. There was an immediate flutter of excitement in the cabin. The daughter, who had entertained me at dinner, came in at one door, another daughter came from somewhere else, while the huge form of their mother, shaped like a goose-egg round at both ends, seeming in danger of rolling over any minute, appeared in the center of the group. She was carrying an axe which she let come down to the floor with a thump, and supporting herself on it with one hand, she surveyed with a stern air the sheriff and his company filing into the cabin. The sheriff, undaunted, extended his hand to her, calling her "Aunt Ann," and inquired after her health.

"Jes, tolerable!" she snapped, as I wondered whether she had some design on him with her axe.

The old man, however, as though to allay any fear that might be entertained of that, said,

"She's jes' been peckin' 'round some with her ole axe."

"Yes, I've jes' been peckin' 'round some," she reiterated, casting a defiant glance around at the company.

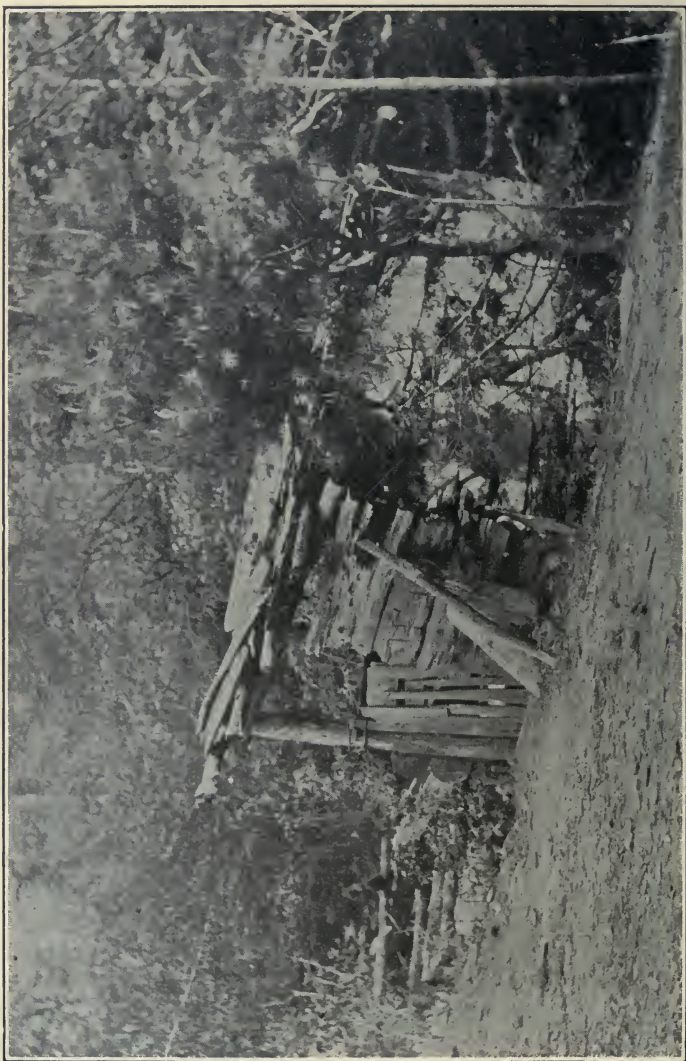
Notwithstanding my curiosity to know who or what the sheriff was after, I mounted and rode on, quite well satisfied that if he were after Uncle Birchfield, he would not find him at home by the time he got down to his cabin with his armed band. His arrival, however, spoiled my plan of visiting the old "bushwacker," for should I stop at his cabin now, I would probably be accused of giving the old fellow warning, or on the other hand, the old fellow seeing me first, might possibly take me for one of the posse and fire at me with his long-barreled rifle just for luck.

Through the trees I got a glimpse of a hovel which I took to be Uncle Birchfield's. As the old man had said, "you'll find him jes' below here, an' if you want to talk with him, he'll talk to you."

The cabin was tumble-down, desolate looking, without a living thing to be seen anywhere around; not even a dog or a chicken. A bit farther on, in a shady glen, I came to a fenced inclosure resembling a pig pen more than anything else I can think of. A dull, grinding noise within attracted my attention, and, dismounting, I made an investigation. The thing was a grist-mill.

Looking over a little wicker gate into its inclosure, I saw the stone grinding the corn that was in the hopper, at the rate of about six grains a minute. An empty meal-bag lay on the ground with its mouth toward the gate, as if it had been dropped by someone in hasty flight. Perhaps that person was then watching me from his secluded retreat among the bushes. Nevertheless, I examined the mill; saw how the water was conveyed through a sluice back of it down to a horizontal wheel that made the stone go round, a primitive contrivance developing very little power, and then I photographed it.

I rode on for ten miles through dense forests. Once only did I see a human habitation, and that was through the trees on the edge of a distant brown field surrounded by forests. Shortly after I passed the mill, two young women, thinly clad and barefooted, with their long hair hanging down each side of their faces, darted Indian-like across my path. All else was silent woods. Occasionally I could see over the tops of giant pines from the narrow apex of the mountain ridge along which my trail led me. I could see great forests spreading out beyond, with mountains rolling away in the distance, and here and there a faint column of pale-blue smoke rising skyward as if the Cherokee still held domain there. It was growing dark as I looked down into a great forest-clad ravine, like a wrinkle in the earth's crust, at the bottom of which



A GRIST-MILL IN THE SOLITUDE OF THE CHILHOWEE MOUNTAINS

The only manufacturing plant for many miles around, and this for grinding the moonshiners' corn

winding thread-like, was a river, and along its bank the gray tracing of a new railroad wound.

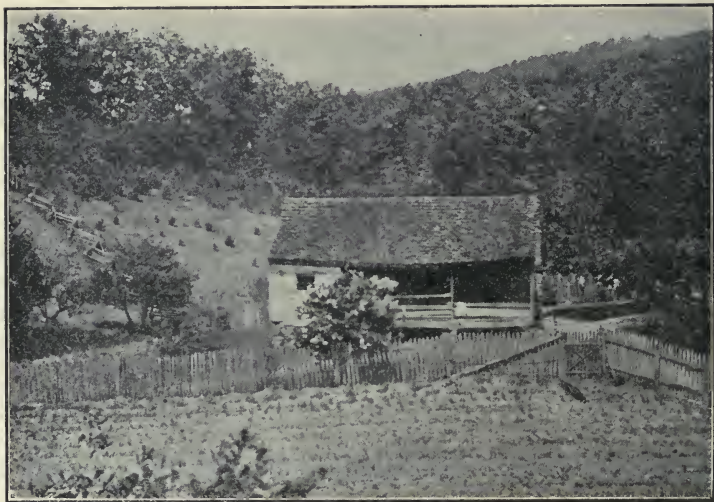
Darkness had nearly closed in on the landscape when I descended a steep mountain declivity at the base of which was a frame house, neatly painted. It stood with its yard inclosing the old log cabin, its predecessor, like a fort guarding some frontier, for behind it was the wilderness, through which I had come, while spread out before it lay broad fields under cultivation with their habitations and people.

I asked a young man in the yard if I could stay over night. He replied that I could, and after putting up my horse, he poured the water out for me in the wash-basin on the porch. As he waited to conduct me into the house, I asked him if he knew of anyone who had gone to the cotton-mills. He replied that the only one he knew of was Mandy Cooper from Tabcat, whose mother did his family washing. Mandy coming home from the cotton-mill on a visit, had stopped at his house, he said. I asked him if he thought Mandy had improved her condition any by going to work in the mills.

"Well, I don't know," he replied; "I heard her mother ask her when she was here, to go home with her and help make a crop. I heard Mandy say that she was through with all the ploughing she was ever going to do, that she wasn't going to get her hands all tanned up again, and it was the cotton-mill for her."

After I had washed, I was conducted into the nicest country home I had been in. It was furnished with bright, oak furniture, and appeared very much like a suburban residence. Supper was already on the table, laid with fine china and silverware, and several guests were present. One of them was a portly old gentleman interested in some property in the mountains. The farmer's wife, a delicate appearing town-bred young mother with her new baby in evidence, served the table, while conversation ran along lines interesting to me.

The portly old gentleman told me about the land he was interested in, and how all the lands I had traversed had originally sold for a cent an acre, just to get them on the tax books. As a matter of principle he exacted rent from everyone living on land belonging to him, or his company. As an example, he told of a man living up in the mountains who had helped him as a witness in a lawsuit, but whom he told



A HOME IN HAPPY VALLEY

Snap shot taken from back of my mount in passing

must pay rent regardless of his services, "if it were only a peck of chestnuts."

I retired stiff and sore from my long ride on that "Kentucky bred horse," and was awakened at four o'clock according to Tennessee farm life, by repeated rappings on my door and calls to come down to breakfast.

This farmer owned an extensive track of bottom land spreading out in front of his house on the Little Tennessee River, from which he harvested several thousand bushels of grain. He and his men were at work by early dawn. The

cotton-mill was of no interest to him, further than the bare possibility of its taking some of his labor away.

I proceeded on my journey down the river a piece, and thence I crossed through Happy Valley over a precipitous mountain to Maryville, where I arrived in the afternoon sore and hungry. I gladly secured the services of a stable man to take my mount back to its owner at Tuscaleechee. I had enough of that horse, and was glad to get a train to take me back to Knoxville.

CHAPTER XXII.

SOME OTHER RURAL CONDITIONS.

WITH the intention of continuing my investigations in the mountains of South Carolina, Georgia and Alabama, I returned to North Carolina. At Hendersonville, a superb little mountain city rivaling Asheville, I learned that the poorer families in some sections of the county had gone to the cotton-mills in such numbers as to fairly depopulate those sections. A project was then under way for developing a splendid water power somewhere in the mountains, and putting up a mill avowedly for the purpose of giving employment to the poor remaining, thus curtailing the necessity of their having to leave for the mills farther south. It was generally strenuously denied, however, that any such conditions of poverty and immorality existed in the county as it was admitted existed elsewhere. The bad conditions were all on the other side of the bordering range of mountains, it was said.

At the mountain town of Tryon, just on the border of South Carolina, I obtained a most interesting interview with its Mayor, who had formerly been a labor-agent for some of the mills. He told me he had traveled over the mountains extensively securing labor, and in his experience he had found Madison County one of the best sources of supply. One reason for this, he said, was that the families in Madison County had so many children, and the other reason was that these children developed into such efficient workers at the mills. His one adverse criticism of the mills was that the influence upon the wage-earners was to encourage extravagance. In their mountain homes before going to the mills, the families

rarely ever saw any money to speak of, but when they got to the mills, finding they could earn money so easily, many of them did not try to save, but spent their earnings as fast as they got them, else they would not work at all, or no more than enough to pay for what they actually needed or wanted. He knew of families, he declared, who had gone to the mills and earned so much money that they actually did not know what to do with it.

The families from Madison County, however, not only proved good workers, he said, but they seemed to possess a desire to earn and save money, in contra-distinction to many from elsewhere, particularly those coming from the flat woods of the lower counties.

To a reference I made concerning the bad reputation Madison County bore, he said,

"That's because the Madison County people are fighters. Where you find a people that will fight, you'll find they will work if you give them a chance. There are some places where the people are so low down they won't fight, and they won't work either."

A practicing physician at this same place, who held an appointment in connection with the State Board of Health, was the first one to give me any information concerning "hook-worm" disease. He said those who suffered from it usually nibbled clay which they would pick out of their chimneys, and which gave rise to the name "clay-eaters." He was undecided whether this clay-eating was due to the hook-worm, or the hook-worm was brought about by the clay-eating. There was no question in his mind, however, that the conditions of the poor people were greatly improved at the mills. On their so-called farms they lived without any sanitary arrangements whatever, and their food was insufficient. At the mills the children got better food to begin with, and the tendency of their entire life was towards improvement. According to him the hook-worm was not so prevalent in the mountains as it was in the flat woods of the lower country, where the conditions

of the poor were much worse than they were in the mountains.

At Tryon, my further investigations were interrupted by a serious fall which caused a painful attack of pleurisy, necessitating my return to Asheville for treatment. Thence, before I had fully recovered, I pursued my investigations up the Murphy branch of railroad into Cherokee County, the west-most county of North Carolina. At Sylva, a small railroad town, I stopped for a day or two to recuperate, as much as for anything else. At this place I interviewed a Methodist Minister born in the mountains of Kentucky. He expressed himself as not being much in sympathy with the missionary work carried on in the mountains, as he believed it of little avail. He mentioned one lady living in an elaborately built cabin, luxuriously fitted up, whose work consisted chiefly in giving away clothing sent to her from the North, to the idle poor. He said that the families who got the clothing could get work and earn a living for themselves if they wanted to, and that giving them their clothing only encouraged their idle habits.

With respect to the families going to the mills, he said he was at first like almost everyone else, very much opposed to it, but he had become thoroughly convinced that it was the very best thing for them. His convictions were brought about by his preaching around in the mountains. Occasionally his attention would be called to some person, usually a young woman, much brighter appearing, and better dressed than the others, and upon making inquiry concerning her, he would receive for reply

“Oh, that is so-and-so’s daughter, home on a visit. She has been down to the cotton-mills.”

To show me typical conditions among the very poor, particularly among the families of women and children, he took me to a cove scarcely a mile from town. There, perched on the barren side of the mountain were two cabins and a shack. The two cabins were occupied by women and children, and the



WHERE POVERTY, IGNORANCE AND IMMORALITY PREVAIL.

Two cabins and a shack on this barren mountain-side were occupied by families of women and children. The last generation of children

shack by a woman who chose to live by herself. All these persons belonged to the same family. Prior to the civil war, the mother, now an aged grandmother, belonged to a family of the well-to-do class of farmers. About the beginning of the war her husband became involved in a feud quarrel with a neighboring family, and there followed a series of incidents such as the burning of haystacks, maiming of stock, etc. Accusations and denials followed, and then threats. Finally the head one of the warring factions, with an armed band pretending to be soldiers, descended upon the other, and under pretense that the woman's husband was a traitor to one side or the other of the conflict, then in progress, arrested him, took him away from the house and shot him dead.

The wife of the murdered man, left with nine children, found it next to impossible to make a living for them, and she was finally obliged to sell the farm. With a part of the proceeds she bought the cove the minister took me to see. At first she was able to raise enough corn on the mountain-side to feed her children, but as they grew, the land grew poorer and they grew poorer, too. And then more children were born, and matters went from bad to worse. Each of her three daughters had several children, one or two of them mulattoes. Still they were hard-working women. Daily if necessary, or when the work was to be had, they would trudge down the mountain to Sylva to wash and scrub, frequently bringing big baskets of clothes home with them to be laundered. Their cabins showed much more care and neatness, than many of those I had seen elsewhere, and where there was less evidence of immorality.

"Now," said the Minister in sizing up the situation, "you could build schools and churches for these people; but what is the use? We have enough schools and churches right in Sylva, but they don't go to them. Can you blame them? They know that they are looked down upon, and they have all they can do to get something to eat. I am friendly with them

and go to see them, but it is not religion they want. As long as they remain here they will be as you see them."

The Mayor told me also of a woman with five children, all illegitimate. She lived around in abandoned cabins and shacks, sometimes sleeping out in the fields or wherever she could find a place to lay her head. Two of her children were actually frozen to death. Winter was coming on again, and



THE AGED GRANDMOTHER LEFT WITH NINE CHILDREN

The children with no opportunity to work and improve themselves, grew from bad to worse.

knowing this woman's plight, the Mayor offered to send her to a cotton-mill, but she did not want to go. As a final inducement, he agreed to pay her transportation to the mill with the understanding that her two elder children should work in the mill, and, after a reasonable time had elapsed, if she was not satisfied, he would pay her transportation back to the mountains. With this understanding she went with her three remaining children to the mill.

Later the Mayor went down to the mill and hunted her up.

He found her living in a nice four-room cottage, leading a respectable life. No one knew anything about her past, nor was it known that her children were illegitimate. The cottage was well furnished, and the family would scarcely be recognized as the same persons who had left the mountains only a short time previously. The oldest child, a girl sixteen, was earning one dollar and twenty-five cents, and the boy, thirteen, was earning one dollar a day. The youngest child, age nine, was attending school. The mother added to this income by taking in washing. To the Mayor's inquiry whether she was ready to return to the mountains, she replied,

"No indeed!"

As the Mayor was taking his leave, the thirteen year old boy, toiling in the mill at one dollar a day, with two-thirds of the time allowed him for play, said he would never forget the Mayor's kindness in sending his mother to the mill, as long as he lived. In twelve months the mother paid back all the money advanced for her transportation, besides paying for the furniture and other expenses the mill had incurred in getting her started.

Everywhere I inquired about the families who had gone to the mills, the result was about the same. Some of those whom I interviewed did not want to admit it, but upon careful questioning, I would find that their adverse opinions on the subject were not based upon any foundations in fact, but usually upon some motive of self-interest. I remember one young woman who had taught school in various parts of the mountains. She talked very interestingly, and presented some amusing incidents of her experiences, such as on one occasion a family of boys, ranging in years from twenty-five down, coming to school, the eldest hugging a new primer. She was frightened nearly to death, she said, and so glad when she saw the eldest one stretch himself out on a bench and go to sleep, the others soon following his example. On another occasion a little fellow tried to burn her up by crawling under her desk under the school-house and making a fire. Getting the fire out,

she chased him up a tree, where he sat making faces and throwing branches down at her.

When I told her what my mission in the mountains was, she exclaimed,

"Oh, I reckon I'd better shut up for we don't want our people to leave the mountains for the cotton-mills."

"I don't see why we might not as well get shed of the class that usually go," said a young man joining in our conversation. "We've got enough people here that's no good to themselves or anyone else, and you know it."

Then he proceeded to tell of a pitiful sight he had witnessed in Northern Georgia. It was of a drunken father staggering along with two little children who were trying to guide his footsteps. At last they could help him no longer for he toppled over in a drunken stupor. The fierce sun beat upon his upturned face as the two little children contemplated him sadly. Then a thought seeming to occur to them. They trudged around gathering up brush, and branches of trees with twigs and leaves, placed them carefully over the drunken parent, building a shady bower for him, and then hand in hand they went away.

At Bryson City, a delightful mountain town, I was very much amused at the portly, well-fed hotel proprietor, who conducted me from the train to his hotel. We stood in the shade of his broad street as I told him that I was studying the conditions of the poor people on their mountain farms.

"We have no poor people in this county," said he. "Everybody here has enough to eat, and money enough to pay their taxes, and that's all they want."

Just then there was a hearty outbreak of laughter at our side, and we turned to see a jolly, little fat man in a khaki suit, indicating a procession of poor people tramping by.

"No poor people here! What do you call that?" he exclaimed.

Two gaunt, hungry-looking men led the procession. One of

them carried a long gun and a child. The other, carrying a gunny sack of plunder, led a lean hound at the end of a string. Following the two men was a long-legged, awkward boy, his trowsers reaching only halfway down his bare legs. He was carrying a baby, too. Behind him followed an old woman hobbling along with the aid of a staff, and behind her came a much younger woman with a frying-pan, a coffee-pot and a tin cup dangling at her waist. Her apron girdled around her contained a roll of other things.

"Ain't that an outfit for you!" exclaimed the jolly fat man, who proved to be a stranger as well as myself.

The hotel proprietor smiled, as he said it was merely a family moving.

"What have they got to move?" we asked.

"When them folks get ready to move," was the good-natured reply, "they just put the fire out, and call the dog."

Anxious to learn more about these people, I found a neighboring shopkeeper who knew all about them. He said they belonged to a class of semi-nomads known as the Mathis family, who were known generally for their worthlessness. One of their chief haunts was on Mingus Creek, whence there was a well-defined trail made by them in their migrations back and forth to Cataloochee, a wild, mountain creek in Haywood County. They would habitually take up their abode in some one of the vacant cabins usually strung along the mountain creeks. When the spirit moved them, or at some feeling of displeasure with the landowner, they would gather up their few effects and move, sometimes trailing over the mountains into Tennessee, where leading a vagabond life until tired of that, they would trail back again.

The storekeeper said he remembered the family well for he lived on Mingus Creek when a boy. His widowed mother on one occasion getting behind with her crop, gave a "party" to her neighbors who were expected to help her get in the crop. He said that some of the Mathis family came, and the most remarkable part of it all was that they who were most known

for their worthlessness and could rarely be prevailed upon to work for wages, worked harder than anyone else.

I subsequently went up on Mingus Creek to see some of the conditions and learn more about this Mathis family or tribe. Where the creek comes down the mountain entering into the Oconalufty, there is a broad piece of bottom land forming an extensive field. In the midst of this field is an old, partially-demolished log house, used as a barn. Tradition



WHERE TRADITION SAYS NANCY HANKS SERVED AS A HOUSE GIRL.

says that in this house Nancy Hanks, mother of Abraham Lincoln, served as a house-girl. I questioned a number of persons, both in Bryson City and elsewhere, respecting the tradition, and they all stoutly maintained that it was true. Their grandfathers or grandmothers remembered the girl who came with the Enloe family, pioneers from Rutherford County, when the Cherokees held domain in these parts. The story was that there was a scandal in the family over the Hanks girl and she was sent away with a party of Kentucky traders, who were returning over the mountains across Tennessee.

I took dinner with the present owner of the property, a well-to-do-farmer, who asserted that he had heard the old folks tell of Nancy Hanks living there. The original Enloe house was a two-storied cabin built of hewn logs. It was the biggest and best in the county for miles around. That there was a quarrel in the big house over Nancy, he said, and that Nancy went away with the Kentucky traders was certain, because all the folks said so.

While we were seated on the porch waiting for dinner, I asked him if he knew any of the Mathises.

"Gad, yes," he exclaimed, "yer got 'em all around here," and he indicated several men and boys sitting around on the edge of the porch. "There's Jim, he's been to the cotton-mills," nodding towards a big-boned fellow sitting in front of us. "Stand up, Jim, and show yourself," he commanded.

Jim slowly drew himself up, and then seemed to shake himself out preparatory to making a good exhibit.

"Look at the feet on him," said the farmer. "He never had a pair of shoes on in his life."

"Did so!" said Jim boldly. "I got a pair now."

"Oh, yes! So you have! Brought home a pair with you from the chaingang."

"From the chaingang!" I exclaimed.

"Yes, he's only just got back from the chaingang. It was this way. A preacher came over the mountain from Tennessee, an' went to preachin' in the school-house at the head of the creek. He was a little wrong in the head and the boys thought they would scare him an' run him off, but the ole preacher wouldn't scare. He showed fight, an' the boys knocked him in the head with a rock. They thought they had killed him an' ran off. Then they decided to bury him, an' they sent Jim back first to see if he really was dead. Jim found the preacher was alive, felt sorry for him, helped wash the blood off, an' then turned witness for him when he had the boys indicted. The boys got out on bail an' then to get

square with Jim, they had him indicted for carrying a pistol. Jim did have an' ole pistol, but it wouldn't go off. He was the only one in the bunch who got tried and convicted, the others getting out on bond.

"The Judge saw that Jim got the worst of it an' felt sorry for him, but he said he'd have to comply with the law, an' he gave Jim six months. The Sheriff told Jim that he would be easy on him; to stay around the court-house, an' he wouldn't lock him up, only at night, but Jim no sooner finds himself loose than he comes hiking back home. So the Sheriff comes up an' gets him an' puts him on the chaingang, an' Jim's just got back."

Anxious to hear from Jim his experience at the cotton-mill, repeated questioning and cross-questioning, got from him the story which he was either too reluctant or too stupid to tell coherently. His mother, brothers and sisters had received their transportation to the mill. At the mill they were given a house, and supplied with furniture and rations for two weeks, at the end of which time, mother, brothers and sisters, himself included, "hiked back" to the mountains again. They tramped over the Blue Ridge from South Carolina as far as Saluda. There they presented such a pitiful sight that a collection was taken up for them, and their railroad fare was paid home. I asked Jim if they didn't treat him well at the mill.

"Waal enough," he drawled.

"Then why didn't you stay?" I asked.

"They wanted us ter work," another drawl.

"Didn't you expect to work?"

"Not all the time."

"What did they pay you?"

"Nuthin'!"

"Didn't pay you nothing?"

"Nope!"

"But they would have paid you if you had stayed?"

"Dunno!"

And Jim insisted that he did not know whether they would

have paid him for working in the mill, nor did he know how much they agreed to pay him.

As we went in to dinner, I asked the farmer whether he believed it true that Jim did not know how much he would have been paid at the mill had he worked.

"Of course not," came the reply. "He don't know anything about money, nor do any of the rest of 'em. They don't know even what I pay 'em. I am supposed to give 'em fifty cents a day, but I don't give it to 'em unless I think they have earned it. Then they don't want money either. They won't work only when they want some tobacco, or a gallon of meal. An' to get any work out of 'em after I have given 'em what they want, I have to sit down on a stump an' watch 'em. If I don't watch 'em, as soon as I'm out of sight, they're gone a fishin', o' after some ole ground hog. They'll work all day with one of their ole houns abarkin', to dig a groun' hog out of his hole."

I was informed by another man engaged in growing ginseng in another part of the county, that at a small settlement called Medlin, transportation had been furnished for nearly the entire population which went off to cotton-mills in Georgia. But it was not long before they were back again. Asked why they had returned my informant smiled as he said,

"The work was too steady for them."

I learned that many of these people had large families, that they were usually small in stature and degenerate; that they raised a little corn, and their other supplies were obtained chiefly by digging medicinal roots which they traded at the local stores for such things as they most required, such as a few yards of calico, snuff and tobacco.

At Murphy, the seat of Cherokee County, the west-most county of North Carolina, I was entertained most royally by a landlady famous to all traveling men for her hotel and table. In addition to her main building she seemed to have little annexes all around it, and these were connected with big gongs, like fire alarms, which she invariably sounded at sunrise and



A ROOT DIGGER WASHING HER ROOTS

She is illegitimate. She has three illegitimate children, two of whom are shown in photograph. She realized fifteen cents for the roots she dug in one day.

at mealtime, to awaken her guests, or to summon them to table. And if they did not heed her gongs, she made their lives fairly miserable until they did.

Learning that I was ill she concocted medicine for me, and without waiting for its effect, summoned a physician who compounded more medicine. He refused to make any charge because he was just looking around prior to deciding upon a place to locate.

Murphy proved to be a most pleasant place among the hills, possessing a delightful climate, and spreading over so many miles of territory that it was said to be in superficial area, one of the largest towns in North Carolina, although the census report gave it a population of only six hundred and four. The people whom I met were very kind to me. They resembled very much the better class of people I had met in Tennessee. They made no attempt to deny the existence of a very poor and worthless class among them, and more remarkable still, when the labor agents came up from Georgia to secure labor for the cotton-mills, instead of attempting to enforce the law inhibiting them taking labor out of the State, they assisted them, even the town Commissioners extended them every facility for doing so. The opinion was expressed without reservation that if these people could be induced to go to the mills and remain there, it would be not only better for them, but for the County and State as well.

So much interest was taken in my work that I found the information sought not only fully given me, but individuals would put themselves out to show me types of the decadent families referred to as they appeared in town. On one occasion I was called to go and see a family of women and children, who were in a neighboring store bartering the baskets they had made for tobacco, and a few yards of calico. There were two or three girls with flimsy skirts reaching only part way down their bare legs. They were very small in stature and of a yellow color, presenting a very low order of physical inheritance and intelligence, differing very much from any of

the people I had ever seen in either Madison, Yancey or Mitchell Counties. I could well understand, with these specimens of humanity before me, why the Mayor of Tryon, after scouring the country for cotton-mill labor, confined his efforts to Madison County, which, as he said, though notorious for its fights and bloodshed, furnished the mills with a class of workers who usually made good.

I learned further, that between these degenerate people living around in the woods or anywhere they could find a place to live, there was another class of small landowners, extending down into Georgia, of a more robust type, but of a very low moral and social order. The most active and enterprising of them made blockade whiskey whenever they got the chance or succeeded in raising enough corn in order to make it. These people for the most part, were descendants of Oglethorpe's colonists in Georgia, who had made their way up into the foot-hills and mountains looking for gold, and had eventually entered small tracts of land upon which they settled permanently. As they owned the land, families of this class rarely went to the cotton-mills, although it was admitted that anything that would get them out of their isolation, and environment of ignorance and vice, and teach them industrious habits would be better for them.

One man in discussing with me their lonesome lives of isolation, said,

"If I were obliged to live the lives they do, I would commit suicide."

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE BUREAU OF LABOR.

FROM Cherokee County I was peremptorily ordered to Washington. Stopping, on my return at several mills, to verify certain data previously secured, I was very much impressed with the changes wrought since the beginning of the investigation, in the textile industry affecting the people dependent upon it for support. The panic in New York had affected the South to the extent that many of the mills were compelled to shut down, while some were running on half time only. At Asheville the managers of the mill informed me that they were running for the reason that they did not want to discharge their employes and see them out of work. They had the capital with which to run but as they were selling no goods, they were piling them up in their warehouses.

In the little mill village of Elk Mountain near Asheville, I found general disconsolation, where a few months before I had left a contented and prosperous mill community. The mill had shut down, the company had gone into bankruptcy and "Uncle Billy," the watchman, cheerful and jovial as ever, had gone fishing. He said he never had believed in the mill in the first place, for it allowed the folks from the farms to earn too much money and become extravagant. On the farms they were a good deal better off because they did not need so "many fixings, clothes and things," as they did at the mills, and they did not eat so much either, and now that they had acquired extravagant habits, they couldn't live on the farms.

At another place my attention was called to a remarkable example showing how education in the South is affected by



GRADED SCHOOL BUILDING AND VILLAGE STREET

At Stanley, when the cotton-mill shut down the school closed, due to lack of funds supplied by the mill in its prosperity. The above view is taken at Swensonville, N. C., several miles from a railroad, where child labor evils are declared to be the worst.

the cotton-mills which our reformers claim keep the children out of school. It was a newspaper notice giving an account of the closing of the school at Stanley, because of the shutting down of the mill that had supplied the funds for a four-months' term in addition to the four months provided by the State. And yet it is maintained that the cotton-mills deprive the children of an education.

Upon reporting at the office of the Bureau of Labor at Washington, I was told to write a report, but upon starting to write that report, my findings respecting child labor and the improvement of the families at the mills, were met with protests. I was told that it was an established fact that factory employment was detrimental to the employed, that the captains of industry who employed the children, never worked a day in their lives and that they exploited the lives of the little children whom they employed, for their own personal gain. My presentation of facts was continually disputed and upon presenting evidence, attempts were made to cast them aside with the bare statement that children should not work anyway—they should be in school.

I was assigned to a desk in a big room literally filled with disorder and noise, and there I was supposed to write a report; a report which I could plainly see, was not wanted at all. At other desks in the room were poor over-worked clerks, such as I read about every year in the Washington newspapers, clamoring for increased salaries. Among them was a conspicuous little man, who frequently came to the office with a basket of live chickens, which he carefully deposited on the floor, while with a big cigar in his mouth, he would sit down to a machine that made a noise resembling an old-fashioned corn-sheller. With a fierce scowl on his face, and his cigar stuck at an angle of forty degrees, he would grasp the crank of the machine and turn out numbers. He multiplied them, divided them, or subtracted them, as required. I believe he declared himself able to do any kind of a mathematical problem with that machine, from squaring a circle to computing

the number of miles to the moon. I heard it said that before getting that job he ran a faro bank. As he bore the name of the illustrious father of our country, he was assigned to the Bureau of Labor, to keep him out of further trouble, it was said.

At a desk near mine was a special agent of the child labor investigation, who had been called in from the field for not turning in any schedules, and he was kept busy manufacturing them. Every morning he came to the office with an assortment of cryptographs on little pieces of paper, and pretending to decipher them, he filled in the schedule blanks with amounts added to the family income by coal picked up alongside the railroad tracks or by a flock of hens, at a glass factory in Pennsylvania. As he failed to manufacture the data and turn out the completed schedules fast enough, a high-salaried clerk was assigned to assist him, much to the disgust of the clerk, who frequently broke out into denunciations of him, his chickens and his cryptographs.

In a corner by the window was a fat little printer with an Irish name, who frequently added to the hum-drum by reading proof. Next to my desk was a real Irishman, as witty as he was scrappy, the same who was assigned to assist the child labor agent in his manufacture of data, and who not only quarreled with him over the translation of his cryptographs and his chickens, but occasionally broke forth in invectives, comparing the noise in the room to a boiler shop. At the next desk to his was a doctor of medicine usually engaged in adding up columns of figures without the aid of a machine. He belonged to a class known as "sundowners," because they draw a government salary during the day and practice their medicine upon such unfortunates as they can get to take it, after the sun has gone down.

At the next desk was a very quiet and harmless old gentleman, who slept most of the time, undisturbed by the political discussions that frequently took place, or by the outbreaks of temper on the part of my Irish neighbor, or the nerve-racking,

corn-sheller-like computing machine. It was said that this old gentleman was a veteran of the civil war, that he had been picked up on the battlefield, that he was unable to tell who he was or to what regiment he belonged, and so he was eventually sent to the Bureau of Labor.

We had human specimens of almost every kind in that Bureau, from an ex-policeman to a Dunker with long whiskers, in a clerical garb, all of whom were supposed to be engaged more or less, in the study of grave economic and industrial problems. Among them were strong labor Union advocates and Socialists, and I am not sure but at least one Anarchist. There was a German professional uplift worker, a partially paralyzed Doctor of Philosophy and a Russian Doctor of something, forming a little coterie in a room by themselves. So strenuously did they combat my findings with respect to child labor in the South that I endeavored to learn upon what grounds their arguments were based. The German doctor, as a final argument, maintained that the child should not learn to work, for his learning to work tended to increase competition and take the bread out of another's mouth.

The semi-paralyzed doctor said he was a secretary of the National Child Labor Committee and that he was instrumental in the recent legislation in Washington inhibiting a child working at anything useful, but allowing him to peddle shoe-strings on the street, under which law a butcher had been arrested for allowing his son to wrap up packages in his meat shop on a Saturday holiday. When I called attention to a poverty-stricken child whose sole hope for betterment was a job, and asked this advocate of child labor legislation what was to become of such a child if not allowed to work, he replied that he did not care anything about that, which seemed to me to be the characteristic attitude of the organizations. They do not care anything about the child. The welfare of the child is subservient to their own selfish aims.

As a final argument against the position I held with respect to my investigations in the South, I was asked by the Russian

doctor, who was either a Socialist or an Anarchist, whether I was not aware that it was the purpose of the Bureau to support the representations made by Mr. Beveridge in his Senatorial Speech, which representations were the primary cause for the investigation. For my part I could not conceive such a state of affairs at all probable. I believed the people's money appropriated by Congress, was for a fair investigation and not for the purpose of supporting either side of a controversy.

I was curiously interested in the work of the little coterie of philosophers. As far as I was able to ascertain from personal observation, the daily routine of two of them consisted of discussing Socialism, beginning at diverging points and coming to an agreement to the effect that no one should be allowed to work too much, and everyone should get more money for the little he did except the business man, the captains of industry and the manufacturers. These formed a cruel grasping lot of "pirates," preying upon society, and they should not only be deprived of their emoluments gained through their idle habits, and by the sweat of others, but drastic measures should be taken to eliminate them as factors in our industries and civilization. Every morning the Russian and the paralytic philosopher methodically seated themselves at their respective desks, drew out their supply of Turkish tobacco and proceeded to roll cigarettes as they ascertained the points of the thesis for the day, upon which they differed. Enveloped in clouds of tobacco smoke, they carried on their discussion, and by lunch time they would have pretty well agreed upon the points upon which they differed. In case they did not get together on their differences, they would refer the matter to the German Socialist as soon as he returned from his Club, as final arbiter. At half-past four they hustled. They hustled to get out of the building. They usually hustled a little before that gathering up their cigarette cases, putting away their tobacco and getting their hats, in order to be ready to get out of the office at the stroke of the half-past,

when their faithful services to an ungrateful government were over for the day.

There were so many doctors of one kind or another in that Bureau that I frequently got mixed up with them and was myself called doctor. My immediate chief was a pharmaceutical doctor, whose specialty appeared to be reducing the value of the cow-product as ascertained by the agents at the Southern cotton-mills. In one instance at least, he insisted upon my reducing the amount one old lady received from her cow because the man who owned the pie counter where he got his daily luncheons, said his herd of dairy cows near Washington did not average him that much per cow per year.

Among the other doctors was a very active medical doctor, who handed out lead-pencils and such things, receiving a salary of eighteen hundred dollars a year for this work, it being alleged I believe, that this high salary was due to his many years of faithfully-performed service; as far as known, he never having lost a single pencil.

Other medical and philosophical doctors, engaged on scientific work,—such as the tabulating of accidents occurring to factory operatives after four o'clock, to prove that the accident was due to their fatigue from working more than six hours—received salaries much less than the doctor handing out lead-pencils. Still other salaries were regulated or irregular, not according to the value of the services performed, but according to some mysterious process which no one seemed able to explain further than attributing it to favoritism, which even then did not seem to me to work out by any rule of reason applicable to human intelligence. As an example, my Irish friend assigned to assist the child-labor agent in the manufacture of data from his unintelligible cryptographs received a salary of sixteen hundred dollars, while the cryptograph man received only twelve hundred. It seemed to me and to my Irish friend also, that according to all known business and scientific methods, the author of the cryptographs, the brains of

SUCH CHILD TOILERS AS THESE WERE FOUND

They are doffer boys who were playing ball between doffs. They are represented by the special interests as working twelve hours daily in the close confining air of the cotton-mill. When one of the Commissioner's scientific sociologists was asked whether she had ascertained that these boys played two-thirds of the working day, she replied, "Oh, yes; but then they are allowed to run around outside the mill where they learn to smoke cigarettes."



the peculiar method, and the director of the same should receive a higher salary than his subordinate clerk.

Other examples of this curious way of regulating salaries were presented by some of those paid the field agents on the woman and child labor investigation. These agents had qualified for their positions as required by law, through the Civil Service Commission, by "competitive examination," whatever that meant, for it was not those who qualified and stood the highest in their examinations, who received the highest salaries, but in some instances, those who stood high in their examinations received the lowest salaries.

The case of one young man who had failed completely in his examination before the Commission, was a notorious example of this, which proved very discouraging to those agents who believed efficiency and good work should have its reward. This young man by a second rating of the examination papers received a percentage that barely brought him within the lowest mark required for eligibility to appointment, whereupon he was appointed and sent into the field at a salary equal to that paid many of those who stood highest among the list of eligibles. In the field work assigned him, he failed completely, after which he was given an office boy's job and his salary was raised above that of those who had not only obtained a higher rating in their "competitive examinations," but who had competently performed the work required of them in the field.

In my own case, while the Commissioner of Labor had demurred at appointing me at all, admitting that my examination papers showed ability and a record above those already in the service, I was appointed at the lowest salary on the list, regardless of the fact that I was assigned to one of the most important, if not the most important phases, of the investigation. The work required of me necessitated peculiar fitness, such as ability to ride into the remote mountain localities, to travel on foot in some instances, and to penetrate the nooks and corners of alleged moonshiners, and other reputed lawless

folks. Finally, left to my own resources in the rural districts, the imputation was made that I did very little work at all. For this reason I was called in from the field and assigned to a desk, which was the punishment given to agents whose field work was considered unsatisfactory.

To an experienced investigator and one familiar with the just and reasonable object of an investigation, the methods pursued by the Bureau were beyond belief. That the object of an investigation is to develop facts irrespective of what those facts may show did not seem to be considered at all. On the contrary, the aim appeared to be to collect such facts only as would prove some theory or hypothesis. When it was found that the facts collected failed to prove the hypothesis as desired, another try would be made with the same set of facts along other lines. When it was finally decided that the desired result could not be obtained, the entire question was disposed of by elimination. Even the facts as secured in the field were eliminated from the investigation in some instances, while in others they were deliberately changed in order to substantiate the hypothesis sought to be proven.

One of the most flagrant examples of data being actually changed on the schedules in order to prove an hypothesis was that relating to the wages of adults and children employed on the same work. It is stated and generally supposed, that the children in a Southern cotton-mill are employed because their services are secured at a less cost to the manufacturer than those of adults. To show that this is true, the inquiry "are children paid the same wages as women for the same work?" was placed on the schedule. The agents making the investigation found that they were and they answered the inquiry accordingly. Thereupon their schedules were returned to them with instruction to change their answer from "Yes" to "No." When it was found that the agents themselves protested against making the change and finally after the change was made, that the desired object could not be attained, even with this misstatement of fact, the entire matter was elimi-

nated from the investigation, so that the very important question respecting the wages paid adults and children for the same work, remained unanswered for the reason that they were paid precisely the same.

Another example of the Bureau's method of juggling with facts in order to prove or disprove something, was that relating to the family incomes. In seeking to prove that there is no necessity for a poor man's child or children working, because of his poverty, which we all know is the fundamental reason for it, data on the schedules showing the earnings of the adult members of the family were collected and tabulated. In order to increase these earnings, all additional sums, either received by the family or assumed, such as the estimated value of the produce of a vegetable garden and that of the family cow, were also entered on the tabulating sheets as incomes, and then the remarkable exhibit was made of entering all proceeds from the sale of property, either real or personal, as incomes. According to this method, a family having sold their cow or old horse in order to pay their ration bill, was credited on the tabulating sheet with the amount received for the horse or the cow, added to their earnings. Of course if they had stolen the horse or cow this would be correct. In accord with the same ruling, a well-to-do person shown to have sold a piece of property, say for three thousand dollars, was also entered on the tabulating sheet with the three thousand dollars represented as his income. These various amounts, earnings, estimated value of garden produce—though the cow might have eaten the produce and the family eaten the cow—and the money received for the sale of an old wheel-barrow or a donkey engine, all down as family incomes, were summed up and the total divided by the number of families in the group, the resultant quotient being presented as the income of each family.

By this method it was proved that Bill Jones, who was actually a very poor man, out of work and unable to make both ends meet, had an income sufficient to support his family

without the necessity for his children going to work because some of the money recived by Beriah Wilkins for the sale of his house and lot was given to Bill Jones, a gift which Bill never realized. When after weeks of time spent in this sort of juggling with data, it was seen that it could not possibly stand the scrutiny of the public, and the field agents themselves ridiculed it, it was thrown aside as useless. It was reported as a matter of general knowledge that work of this kind to the estimated value of twenty-five thousand dollars, under the direction of one high-salaried chief alone, reputed to be a scientific sociologist, who had written a book on labor problems, was found to be of no use and destroyed.

As to the agents in the field, with few exceptions, they were honest, unbiased and faithful, and I believe they had entered upon their task with a desire to do good work, but some of them at least, soon became discouraged at the unscientific methods pursued, and the silly things required of them. I know of two at least who protested against the relevancy of many of the inquiries on the schedules, while on the other hand, very important information pertinent to the investigation, was not sought at all. One young lady to my knowledge, reported to the office that the schedules were unscientific, and failed to meet the requirements that the investigation called for, but her protest received no serious attention.

Much time was lost in searching for imaginary evils and compiling unnecessary data, the use of which was very remote to say the least, and which was never used at all. One example of this was the requirement to ask each operative whether he or she stood or sat at their respective occupations, when a knowledge of the occupation itself was sufficient to answer that question. Another one was that requiring the agent to draw a diagram of each of the mill houses visited and file the same with the family schedule. Again certain data on the schedules were required to "harmonize." For example, if an individual reported that he worked three hundred days at one



SUCH CHILDREN WERE FOUND IN THE MILL, KINDERGARTENS AND PLAY GROUNDS

But when they could not be found in the mills, two agents at least, reported that the mill managers hid them away. The above was taken at the Eagle & Phenix Mills, Columbus, Ga., where such children are represented by special interests, as marching in daily procession into the yawning mill.

dollar a day, receiving three hundred dollars, the data entered on the schedule were allowed to pass, but in case the individual began working at seventy-five cents, was raised to one dollar and was receiving a dollar and a quarter at the time the schedule was taken, although the total amount received for the year with the number of days worked, was taken from the mill pay rolls, the schedules were returned to the agents securing the data, with instructions to make the daily wage harmonize with the number of days worked and the total amount received, which could be done only by striking a daily average, and in fact falsifying the data.

With respect to my own work, after my return to the Bureau, I was at a loss to know just what was expected of me, beyond the simple, self-evident fact that my findings respecting the improved conditions of the families at the mills were not wanted. I was directed to read more books and magazine articles on what others had written and spoken on child labor evils and cotton-mills, and when I did find an occasional article relating the good the industries were doing, or had done, these were sneered at, or held up to me with ridicule and contempt. Not infrequently insinuations and hints were cast reflecting upon the motive that caused me to maintain the position I held, such as intimations that it must be because I stood in with the rapacious mill-owners, who got their dividends out of the sweat and toil of children, which children, by the way, none of the agents had succeeded in finding, any more than I had. Two agents, at least, gave as their reason for not finding them that the mill managers hid them away upon their arrivals at the mills.

Finally I appealed to the Commissioner of Labor to know what I was to do. I told him how I had found a deplorable state of affairs in the rural districts, and how the first official of a mill corporation I had visited was found running a Sunday School, and teaching arithmetic to the children of the poor people from those districts where they hardly ever had the advantages of churches and schools in their lives before.

In fact I stated that if I were a Carnegie or a Rockefeller seeking to improve the conditions of the poor in the rural districts, I would first build them a cotton-mill.

While the Commissioner received my views kindly and with an air of absolute confidence in my integrity, he subsequently summoned me to his office and in the presence of one of his chief executives, the same who was reported to have destroyed twenty-five thousand dollars' worth of work trying to prove hypotheses, undertook to tell me that I did not have a particle of evidence to support my findings. The chief executive, however, seeming to grow very impatient at the Commissioner's kindly attitude, declared with vigor that he did not believe that any such conditions as I had found existed on the farms, and that he could bring in a friend of his to refute them. With equal vigor I threw upon the Commissioner's desk a pile of statistical data compiled from the Federal Census, and State Labor and Educational Reports, showing that the educational, industrial and economic conditions had improved beyond question in the counties wherever there was a cotton-mill. I declared that the Bureau was prejudiced with respect to what the woman and child labor investigation should show, and that my findings should either be accepted or that I should be discharged as either incompetent or dishonest in the performance of my duties.

A demand was made that I prove my assertion that there existed any prejudice in the Bureau. This I did by sending for the two learned doctors who had so strenuously combated my findings in the first instance. The outcome was a final declaration on the part of the Commissioner, that while he would not tolerate any bias or prejudice entering into the investigation, a child should not be permitted to work even though found wallowing in the filth of the sewer and its working condition was one of betterment. Not only he believed this, he said, but President Roosevelt believed it also. As to the welfare work at the mills, he stated further that several manufacturers had invited him to their mills to see

it, but he knew it was a fake without looking into it. Further, were he to accept my report without more evidence to support it, the child labor committees, uplift associations, leagues and labor unions would jump all over him.

A few days later I was asked to submit a plan for a second investigation with schedules showing just how the people lived in the rural districts before going to the mills. I immediately submitted a plan for this investigation which was heartily approved, and I was not only authorized to conduct the work in the field, but I was authorized to have full charge of it. Thus I was promoted to an executive position, and an increase in my salary soon followed.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE SECOND INVESTIGATION.

WHILE my work as an investigator consisted simply of securing a knowledge of facts, after once securing that knowledge, it would be as untrue as foolish for me to say that I had no opinion in the matter. But my opinion was based upon the facts as I found them. I had not set out on my investigation to collect facts to substantiate an opinion. Nor did I find fault with the conditions existing because they did not exist as I thought they should. I did not consider that any part of my duty as an investigator.

In taking up my second investigation, I desired to forego all conclusions formed as the result of my first. I wanted to prosecute an entirely new investigation of the previous subject along other and more definite lines, taking every precaution imaginable to prevent the result being influenced by any chance prejudice or bias. I realized that it would be advantageous to my personal interest to show better conditions on the farms than at the mills, although I believed the Commissioner of Labor was as honest in his views upon the subject, as I was in mine. There was proof of this, I believed, in the very fact that he promoted me to an executive position, giving me full charge of the proposed investigation. I plainly saw, however, that the idea had taken root that I had compared some of the very worst and exceptional conditions in the rural districts to the best existing at the mills.

In formulating the schedules for the second investigation, I bore this in mind, making careful provision to show all conditions under which the families live, both on the farms and

at the mills, with the elimination of none. The data collected should also be co-relative. The inutility of collecting one set of statistics on the farms without providing for the collection of a similar set of statistics at the mills was apparent.

The schedule blank formulated, provided for the name of the heads of the families, and their various members, with their ages, earnings, literacy, schooling, physical and other conditions, affecting them socially, morally and industrially. With the family schedules completed it would be shown in each case, the kind of house the family lived in, its furnishings, sanitary condition, distance from a town, post-office, school, doctor, etc. They gave the number of children in the family, their ages, physical condition, literacy, educational facilities, and social and moral surroundings, with the area of land cultivated, crop harvested, and family income during the year, and the kind and quantity of food consumed. In order that the work of securing the information should be free from prejudice, I endeavored to eliminate all possibility of any personal opinion or bias entering as a factor in securing the answers to the inquiries. I aimed to secure in each case a simple statement of fact, and fact only. In getting an estimate of the amount of corn produced by the family on the farm, for example, I confined my inquiry to just how much they produced; not how much they might have produced if they had better land, or if it had rained at the proper time, or if the head of the family had not been down with pneumonia, or something of that sort.

I made provision to show on each schedule the "rations," as they are termed, purchased by the family during the year, in addition to the produce on the farm. This included all expenditures for snuff, tobacco, soap, lamp-oil and other incidentals, in addition to comestibles such as flour, salt, sugar, meat, etc.

I also provided inquiries for showing the habits of the parents, whether industrious and thrifty or otherwise; whether they owned the land on which they lived; the amount

of taxes paid, and for what; whether there were adequate school facilities in the district; whether the children attended school and what were their daily occupations. Furthermore, at the suggestion of the Commissioner or his chief executive, I provided inquiries for showing besides the number of living children in the family, the number which had died, with their respective ages and cause of death.

Any one unacquainted with the lives and habits of the poor people I was required to study, might doubt the possibility of getting all this information with any degree of accuracy. But having already formed some knowledge of them—a knowledge of the meagreness of their earnings, and the scant productiveness of their so-called farms, the monotony of their daily existence, and the small amount of money expended by them—I was confident that by employing the right method, the required data could be secured with a good degree of accuracy.

While I was satisfied of this in the case of the very poor families on the farms, when it came to the prosperous farmer and landowner, who really had something, and an income besides, and who lived as well as farmers in more prosperous communities, I realized that this would be a more difficult matter. But as the well-to-do farmer did not take his family to the cotton-mill, he was really an unimportant factor in the investigation, further than to show just how many of the well-to-do class were living in each community investigated. Therefore to show to what extent the conditions of prosperity or of poverty, and advancement or decadence, were general in the districts investigated, I drafted a schedule for each locality by which this could be shown with more or less precision. This schedule provided for statements showing the area of the township or district, the number of families in it, and their classification according to their industrial or economic condition. Thus with this completed schedule, not only could the density of population for the locality be worked out, but the general conditions of prosperity or poverty would be shown, with other striking features, such as the topography of the

country, its industrial resources and natural advantages for the development of the people.

Realizing the magnitude of the proposed work, particularly in the rural districts, considering that the families to be studied were scattered more or less over a large territory, many of them away from the main arteries of travel, and accessible by travel on horseback in some instances only, and on foot in others, and aware of the personal qualifications requisite for interviewing them, and obtaining the desired information from them, I requested and obtained authorization for appointing persons possessing the special qualifications to assist me in this field work.

In selecting these assistants I did so with the view of obtaining the true conditions of the people as accurately as possible. I was aware that this could not be done by strangers unacquainted with their lives and habits. Naturally looking upon the stranger with suspicion, the country people in particular would either refuse to give him the desired information, or else would beguile him with misinformation, very much as the district solicitor explained at the commencement of my previous investigation, the probable reason for the old cabin dweller beguiling the missionary into believing that he had never heard of Jesus Christ, and which had given rise to the published story as fact. Therefore, it seemed to me that in order to get the required information with any degree of success, it was necessary to get assistants who were already acquainted, at least in a general way, with the lives, habits, and circumstances of the people under investigation. Thus the son of a well-to-do family, a native schoolmaster or an old tax assessor, could go among these people, with whose general circumstances they were already acquainted, and get information in detail which no one of our trained, scientific sociologists from New York or Washington could begin to get with any degree of accuracy. A casual inspection of many of the schedules obtained at the cotton-mills was sufficient to show this.

In order to show more definitely what had become of the families who had actually left their homes in the rural districts, and had gone to the factories, a third schedule was formulated. This schedule was provided with inquiries for the purpose of showing the financial, social, industrial and educational status of the family on the farm, with their subsequent change at the mill, particularly with reference to the changes affecting their children, whether employed or going to school, and whether retrogressing or improving under the changed conditions. A fourth schedule was prepared for the schools in order to show in each district the school facilities, length of term, enrollment, attendance, teacher's qualifications and educational conditions in general.

While I was authorized to formulate these schedules, they were submitted to the approval of the Commissioner and his chief executive. The latter, who had discredited my findings with respect to the conditions on the farms, manfully made amends with an apology, stating that he had no intention of discrediting me, but he believed that some other means ought to be found for improving the conditions of the poor without sending them to work in cotton-mills. For my part I did not consider the study of remedial measures any part of our business.

Together we carefully analyzed the proposed schedules for the second investigation, made changes in them, and otherwise sought to improve them in order to have a more perfect medium for securing the data desired. That these schedules were not hastily prepared is proved by the fact that much time was given to studying and perfecting them after I had presented my first draft. Yet by no means were they entirely adaptable to the conditions found to exist upon attempting to work with them in the field. For example, certain sanitary conditions supposed to exist in connection with every household, and carefully looked into at the cotton-mills, were found not to exist at all with the poor families on the farms, whereas on the other hand, some conditions not thought of at all in

Washington, and having a very important bearing on the investigation, were found to exist. This necessitated the printing of an entirely new set of schedule blanks, in order to complete and round out the investigation, leaving no point uncovered on which information could be desired.

In taking up the work in the field, I not only found it immensely interesting, but I believed the results would be of great value in settling many obscure and mooted questions, and that the information would lead to work of genuine helpfulness among the people living in the deplorable conditions found. My first venture in the field, however, was looked upon by the county officials with an evident degree of suspicion. It was plain that they did not see what the Federal Government had to do with informing itself on their affairs, but I soon allayed all suspicion by explaining the object of the investigation on the one hand, and on the other hand giving the officials themselves, or their friends, the opportunity of earning a little extra money by helping me secure the desired information. For example, to secure a complete list of the taxpayers in the township under investigation, showing the amount of the tax paid by each, and the items of personal and real property upon which they were taxed, I either employed the county clerk who had charge of the records, or some person recommended by him.

When it came to the matter of securing the information called for by the schedules, the employment of some person of influence, ability and integrity in the locality, was sufficient, not only to allay all unfriendly feeling, but it tended towards enlisting the co-operation of the people themselves. This became so marked in some instances as to be funny. Heads of families who had been overlooked, or had not yet been scheduled, came forward in a number of instances, cautiously inquiring why they had thus been neglected. "Ef thet ar' Gov'ment at Washington wanted ter know so much about 'em, they didn't see why they should be left out."

Thus the matter of securing the desired information be-

came a much easier matter than I had anticipated, and it was truly remarkable with what accuracy the heads of families could give in detail their earnings and expenditures for the entire year. They handled so little money, their earnings were so small, and their purchases so nearly in accord with their income and expenditure, even to the amount realized on a horse trade, or the number of bushels of corn they had sold in the autumn at fifty cents a bushel, and bought back in the spring at a dollar, they could tell all about them.

One of the difficulties I found myself facing in the beginning was the demarcation of the district or township lines. There were no maps available, giving these demarcations, and in order that each investigation in a township or district should be confined within its specific limits making it complete in itself, it was necessary to run the township or district lines, and make maps for the purpose. This was done by getting geological survey maps from Washington, and then with information secured from county officials in some instances, and old settlers in others, run the lines as directed in the field on the maps. In the mountains these lines usually followed the apex of a mountain range or the spur of a range, and thence descended with the spur to some large stream or river, which perhaps formed the boundary of the district on that side. In the case of a narrow valley, a basin or a cove, surrounded by mountains, the lines would run all the way around the tops of the mountains inclosing it.

By this method I secured maps of townships and districts of which there were no previous maps in existence.

My method of prosecuting the investigation was first to select the townships or districts in which it was thought advisable to study the conditions. Copies were then secured at the county-seat of the lists of taxpayers in those townships, on blanks provided for the purpose. Each taxpayer usually represented the head of a family. With the list of taxpayers each family could be located and accounted for. Usually while the tax lists were being prepared, I would look

around for a well-recommended and qualified assistant to visit the families and secure the information called for on the schedules. Having selected my assistant, I would generally start the work with him, visiting the families in the territory to which he was assigned, in order to both familiarize myself with conditions, and direct him in the prosecution of the work. When I could not do this, I would give him a trial, and if his trial work proved satisfactory, I would give him a definite assignment and go over the field work with him later.

Knowing how conditions differed in different counties, and even in different localities in the same county, I selected places for the investigation in an extensive range of territory, in order to distribute it over as large a section of country as possible. As soon as an assistant qualified and was assigned to one locality, I hastened to start the work with another assistant in some other locality. This necessitated my being in the saddle a great deal, but the work being once under way, it went very smoothly and rapidly, notwithstanding the extent of the territory over which my field assistants were scattered. When not in the field myself, I usually had my headquarters at a county-seat where I received the schedules by mail as fast as my field agents could send them to me. With the assistance of a secretary, these schedules were all carefully read, compared with the tax lists, and otherwise examined for such inaccuracies of statement or any seeming inconsistencies as may have crept in. I dictated to my secretary such criticisms as I deemed necessary, and these typewritten and attached to the schedules, would be returned for the agent's revision or correction.

Each of the agents, after being definitely selected and assigned to the work, took as much interest in it, and displayed as much enthusiasm in doing it, as I felt myself, and I soon had the work going on simultaneously in four counties in two different States.

In order that I might have a more intimate or exact knowledge of the work as it progressed, when not at my head-

quarters, I was in the saddle riding over the field, personally looking into conditions, consulting and directing my assistants, and collecting all information possible for my guidance. The fatigue of these extended trips was duly recompensed by the information secured, and actual pleasure in the work. The fatigue was much lessened too, by my fortunately obtaining for my journeys an untamed filly that proved to be one of the kindest, gentlest and easiest going saddle-horses I ever rode. She was as playful as a kitten, as faithful as a dog and as earnest in her work, when there was a long journey before her, as the rest of us. Owing to her manner of stretching her neck and looking at everything that attracted her attention, I impulsively called her Rubberneck, and Rubberneck became her name.

CHAPTER XXV.

THE MOUNTAIN PROBLEM.

THE Commissioner having left the matter of conducting my second investigation to my judgment, and anticipating the additional hardships that would be incurred by attempting to carry on the investigation in the rural districts in mid-winter, which was fast approaching, I planned to commence the work at the mills, leaving the mountain work until more propitious weather. On my way South, however, journeying by rail through the mountains of Virginia, East Tennessee and North Carolina, for the purpose of looking the field over, I found the weather so delightful and indications so favorable, that upon arriving in North Carolina I plunged into the rural work at once. The seemingly favorable weather, however, did not last long. Christmas came, followed by a howling blizzard sending the thermometer down to ten degrees below zero.

I was quartered in a luxurious cabin built by a Harvard professor, as a retreat from civilization and strife. The night the zero weather came upon us, I was snugly in bed with a veritable mountain of quilts covering me. Though the cabin was built after most advanced ideas of cabin architecture, I believe the end of my nose projecting from beneath the covers measured the same degree of cold as the thermometer that received the full blast of the storm outside my window. As the storm subsided, I could hear in the still hours of the night, a constant crack, crack, in the direction of the wash-stand, as the water in the pitcher froze into a solid cake. With all the sticks and wood that could be crammed into the Bostonian's fancy fireplace the next morning, a wet cloth froze stiff within

three feet of it. This in a cabin built according to the approved ideas of modern architecture and equipped with electric lights, rugs and trappings, including a thousand-dollar piano. Experiencing this effect of the cold in a section of the country where the poor live in miserable little houses and huts, I was constrained to exclaim

“How under the heavens do they survive, particularly the children!”

The blizzard however did not deter me from continuing my mountain work. While the winter weather was the cause of many personal discomforts, it had its advantages, one of which was the certainty of finding the families at home. My work began in the township which the Bostonian had selected for his cabin retreat, and in which he had attempted to establish an industrial school and a public library. The conditions as they developed in this township proved to be much better, by comparison with those of some other townships, than anticipated. Nearly all the heads of families were small landowners, or where they were tenants, they cultivated their land very much the same as the small farmers who owned theirs.

For the work in this township I selected my first assistant, a lady who had spent several years in the locality, working among the poor, attending the sick, healing the wounded and ministering to the unfortunate. Of all persons it seemed to me she should be best qualified to get the information called for on the schedules, but the necessity of having assistants to the manner born to do this work soon developed. While the lady was of service to me in ascertaining the physical condition of the various members of the families interviewed, when it came to her getting their economic and other conditions she was a failure.

In many instances her power of observation was distorted by what she believed ought to be and was not. She was easily shocked and could not refrain from showing her surprise, chagrin or disappointment. On one occasion she had been

obliged to wash the newly-born babe in the frying-pan in which later the family breakfast was cooked, and she refused to eat any of the breakfast. Naturally a family, however grateful they might be for her timely assistance in need, could not but feel her attitude towards such little circumstances as came along in their simple lives as matters of course. They were inclined to consider the good woman uppish, or else feel that she looked down upon them.

Her inadaptability to the work required was exemplified at one of the first cabins we visited, where she was attending a wounded man who had cut his knee open with an axe. She had appeared on the scene just as two local doctors had their instruments out preparatory to cutting off the man's leg. While they had insisted that the leg must be amputated, she had volunteered to treat the wounded knee and save the leg. The poor man whose leg was at stake raised his voice in favor of the woman; the doctors were dismissed and his leg was saved.

He was stretched out on his cot in his cabin when we visited him. In unstinted terms he expressed his gratitude to the good lady for the progress she had made in saving his leg, and she being threatened with legal prosecution for practicing medicine without a license, he declared that he would go to the county-seat to appear in her behalf, even though he were obliged to hobble there on crutches. Humble as were his home and circumstances, he was waited upon by the various members of his family with careful attention and great respect, which is characteristic among some of the older families in some localities. As the children grow up and mature, remaining at home or settling down in homes of their own nearby, the father's position becomes that of a veritable patriarch.

Having gained the confidence of this old patriarch, stretched out on his cot, wounded as he was, he gave me with remarkable accuracy, the details of his annual income and expenditures, from the amount of money he had made cutting

telegraph poles for the railroad company, to that earned by his deaf son, who occasionally shod a horse or two. He owned no land, but rented that upon which he farmed. He jocularly referred to savings that he had securely put away in a stocking, stating that he reported for taxation one hundred and fifty dollars of it, slyly intimating that there was a good deal more down in the bottom of the stocking that he did not know



THE OLD PATRIARCH'S CABIN AND BLACKSMITH SHOP

He was a prosperous tenant admitting that he had saved money, on one hundred and fifty dollars of which he paid tax.

much about, and of course, if he didn't know all that was there, he could not be expected to pay tax on it.

As I put down his expenditures, including the amount expended for whiskey and tobacco, the whiskey being necessary of course, as a consequence of his wounded knee, I turned to his eldest daughter who stood at the head of his bed with a basin of water, and asked her in a most casual way,

"How much does your tobacco cost you, Lockey Jane?" calling her by the name I heard the others call her.

Lockey Jane was about to reply when the nurse and medical practitioner whom I had engaged to assist me, immediately exclaimed,

“Why, Lockey Jane, you don’t mean to say you chew tobacco, do you?”

And of course Lockey Jane did not want to say that she did.

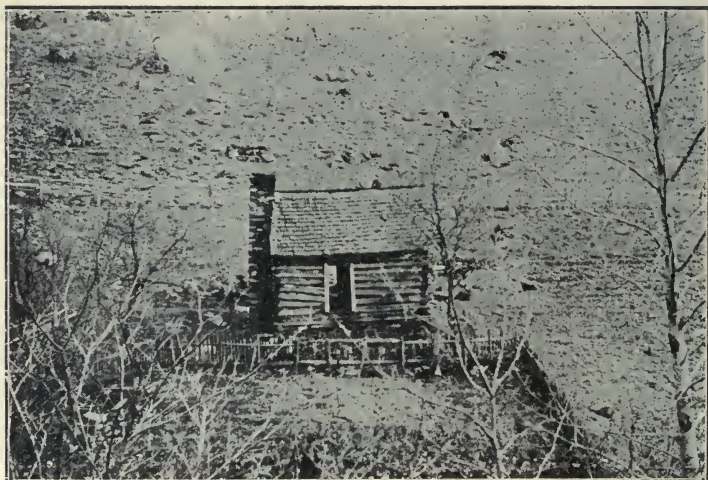
I merely mention this incident to show the necessity in making investigations, of having agents who are not only familiar in a general way with the life and habits of the people under investigation, but who also possess certain peculiar qualifications for the work in hand. The difference in results obtained was aptly illustrated by the employment of another assistant in the same locality, who was to the manner born. He was a farmer and school-teacher, recommended by the County Clerk, and was employed by him at odd times to assist him in his official duties.

My first impression of the man was that he was dull and slow, and methodical to an extreme. His penmanship presented a remarkable and unexpected example of perfection. I first engaged him to copy the tax lists at the county-seat, where I established my headquarters after getting the work well under way in the township where the Bostonian had erected his cabin retreat. After the tax lists were copied together we mounted our horses and went into the district selected for him to work, it being my intention to show him how I wanted the work done. But he soon showed me that he could do the work in many respects much better than I could do it myself.

The first family interviewed was that of a miller with whom we remained for dinner, partaking of his wife’s hot biscuit, fried salt pork and preserved berries. The miller was able to figure out approximately the amount of corn he had ground during the year, and the quantity taken in toll for grinding it. He knew the quantity of flour, corn-meal and salt pork consumed weekly, and freely stated whence came the

money to pay for the things not produced on his little farm. Although he was one of the best and most substantial citizens in the locality, he confessed that he was barely able to make both ends meet from year to year.

This district proved to have some very interesting features about it that are well worthy of mention here. Besides being a very poor district, it was very densely populated. It was bordered by high mountains on three sides. From widely separated points on the high range bordering it on the west,



A CABIN ON THE STEEP MOUNTAIN SIDE

flowed two well-defined creeks, which meeting at some distance from its base formed a triangle, whence, forming a larger stream they flowed on their journey seaward.

Nearly all the way up the two widely separated creeks, were scattered cabins, and plain board houses, with only here and there rare pockets of land available for the production of very much needed crops of corn. The fact that the land itself was insufficient to support its dense population was self evident. Ascending the creek to the left, cabins and houses appeared almost everywhere. One of the first pointed out to

me after leaving the miller was said to have contained a family of twelve persons, all of whom with the exception of two, I believe, had died of tuberculosis. Notwithstanding the practical extinction of this family, evidence that the population was still on the increase was presented in the erection of a new house that could be seen in a distant angle of the mountain. Other houses, while small, were distinctive in character, in that some of them were whitewashed and had white palings around them.

One of the cabins we entered, evidently an old timer, for it was made of great hewn logs and tightly chinked, contained a family of epileptics. One of the children, a matured young man was just recovering from a fit as we entered. The mother told us that all her children were subject to fits, and anxiously inquired whether I did not know of some remedy for them. I learned that the affliction was very common in that section of country, and that the families thus afflicted were referred to as "fitified families."

While the furnishings in the cabin were rude, the beds being made of rough planks, there was a display of cleanliness very different from many of the cabins I had seen in other sections. The rough board floor had just received a scrubbing, and the children's faces, all of whom were pretty well grown, were washed and their hair combed. A characteristic of this section was that many of the families had fruit jars in which they preserved wild fruits and berries for their winter's use. The preserves were put up without the use of sugar, and in order to protect them from freezing in some instances, they were buried in the ground.

A second cabin visited was on the opposite side of a ravine with the mountain rising so steep behind it that it was necessary to scoop out a level place in order to build the cabin. It was occupied by a man, his wife and boy of twelve. The couple were a good-natured pair and intelligent, with a pronounced sense of humor, even in the discussion of their poverty. As typical of nearly all the abodes in the locality,

the cabin was remarkably clean. The man at first insisted that he consumed a "poke" of flour weekly. As his cash earnings during the year totalled the sum of sixteen dollars and ninety cents, to earn which he was obliged to leave home to work on the railroad, eighteen miles away, when questioned as to how he paid for the "poke" of flour consumed weekly, he replied good naturedly, that he did not get it; and when he did not get flour he ate corn. As the amount of corn harvested did not agree with the amount consumed, as stated, he laughingly explained,

"When we don't get the corn to eat we go visiting."

He owned the cabin with its piece of land, which originally cost him forty dollars. He had "made" fifteen bushels of corn on his own land, in addition to which he had "made" some more up on the top of the mountain somewhere, half of which he had to give to the owner of the land for rental.

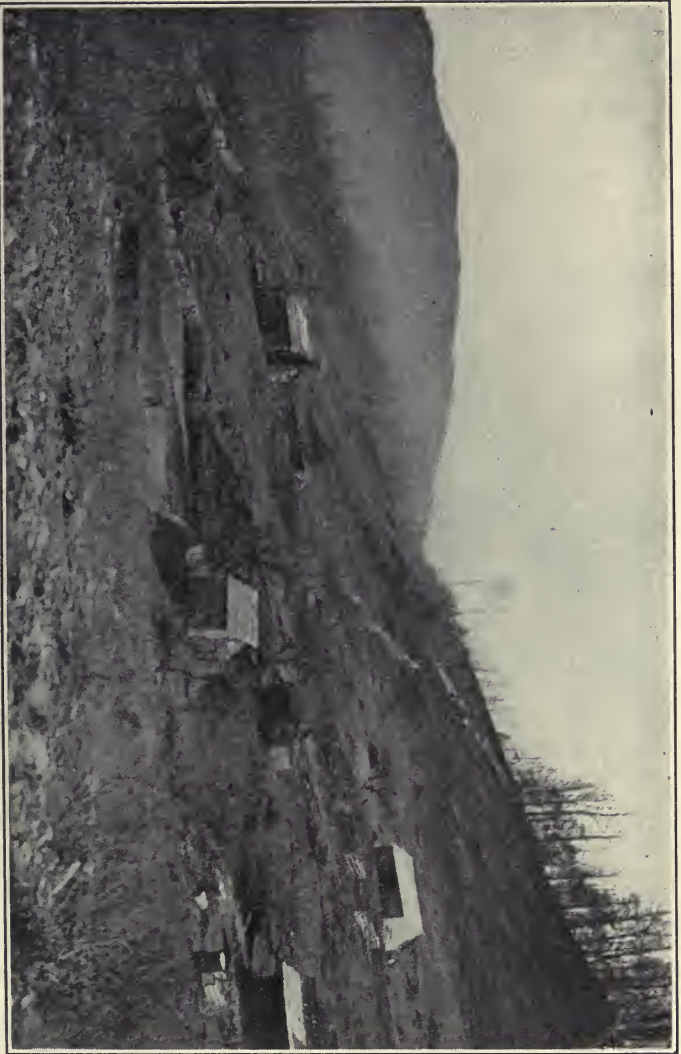
As we left his cabin, he accompanied us down the ravine, which we had to cross to get back to our horses. He freely discussed the poverty that existed in the locality, saying,

"Why, do you know that I could not get work around here for twenty-five cents a day. No one has the twenty-five cents to pay, and ther' ain't no work nohow. We all hope each other out when ther's anythin' to be done, tradin' our work with each other."

As I looked across the ravine at a house that was evidently unoccupied, I asked what had become of its occupants.

"Oh, they got starved out!" he exclaimed with his usual good nature. "Couldn't stand it any longer, and so they went off to the Cranberry iron mines!"

At another house we visited, on the other branch of the creek, a great good-natured fellow, with a wife and a house full of children, sat on the bed as he discussed his household economics and other conditions. He had earned six dollars, he was sure of, up on the mountain hunting hogs. Questioned respecting the medical situation in case of illness, he replied that there was no use getting sick for the nearest doctor was



A DENSE POPULATION AND NO INDUSTRIES

View taken in Mitchell County showing barren aspect of the land where the people have scarcely any visible means of support, and yet they are taxed almost beyond belief.

at the county-seat, and while there were two there, neither of them would make a visit unless they were sure of getting their money, and finally they would suit their own time about coming.

"The only way for a feller ter do," said he finally, "is ter know that he's goin' ter be sick, two or three days before, an' if he's got the money to pay, or a cow or a calf he kin give a mortgage on, the doctor may come afore he dies."

Following the creek to the very top of the mountain, we found an intelligent old pensioner of the Union army, with a buxom, good-looking wife and three or four robust children. The old man was afflicted with phthisic, and his young wife, it was said, worked like a horse. She told me she carried the weekly grist, a bushel of corn, to the mill down the mountain, and lugged it back again, and the wife of the man who had made the six dollars hog hunting said she had seen her shoulder a case of glass fruit jars and go up the mountain with it like a cyclone. I asked her what were her prospects for sending her children to school, to which she replied, none at all, as long as they remained at the top of the mountain.

On the other side of the mountain down a narrow defile, I scheduled a preacher and his family, belonging to another district. The preacher, who was the father of several boys, and quite a young man, was suffering with anæmia. His cash income for the year amounted to ninety-eight dollars, twenty-five dollars of which he accounted for in various collections taken up to pay him for preaching. His wife was a pleasant-mannered little blonde, who displayed skill and care in the arrangement of the one little room of their cabin home, differing greatly from the appearance of the cabin on the outside. It was without any sanitary conveniences, however, and while the preacher himself could read and write, the children could not, and he did not seem to care whether they went to school, remarking that the school was too far anyway and not of much account.

While my assistant was talking to him and his wife, I got

the confidence of the children, and taking them aside, I asked the eldest one how they had passed their Christmas.

"Ole Santa brought Linda a little ole doll," and he let his eyes wander to a grindstone in a corner of the yard on the frame of which was a very much battered, small rag doll.

"And what did you get?" I asked.

"He brought me a little ole han'chief."

"And what do you do all day long?"

"Nuthin'!"



THE BAPTIST PREACHER'S HOME

His cash income from preaching for the year was twenty-five dollars.

"Don't you play?"

"Got nuthin' ter play at. We heave rocks sometimes, then papsie licks us. He don't want us ter heave no rocks."

"What else do you do?"

"Nuthin'!" And then in a burst of confidence as though he were fairly turning his soul loose, he said,

"Oh, we do git so tired doin' nuthin', we don't know what ter do."

While the districts which I worked out on the other side of the mountain, with my farmer-assistant, professed to have a

four months' school, and the county had availed itself of the State law allowing it to make a compulsory school law, it was stated that very few of the children of school age attended. No attempt was made to enforce the law. Such reasons were given by the parents for not sending their children to school as that they were "too poor to send them," that "the younger children were afraid of the older ones," and finally that the school "was no account nohow." As a rule, as was explained by my assistant, who was a teacher himself, the teachers usually secured were inefficient and unable to maintain discipline, and there were frequent fights, sometimes knives being drawn menacingly to settle a dispute between the older boys, and the teachers themselves very often were afraid of them.

The conditions in this district, with its dense population, may be taken as an exemplification of the mountain problem, although it was not part of my work either to find problems or to solve them. The district, according to the oldest inhabitants, was first settled by a man named Buchanan, less than a hundred years ago. Along the creek on which he settled were alluvial deposits protected by the trees of a primeval forest, above which rose the rocky cliffs of mountains on either side. A cleared patch in the forest produced for this settler and his family an abundance of corn, and for meat he hunted bear and deer. As his family increased other cabins sprang up in the neighborhood, and the forest trees were felled to make room for more corn. Since then the forest has completely disappeared; the alluvial soil has been washed away by mountain freshets, and the original settlers increasing and multiplying have married and intermarried. Two-thirds of the people along the creek bear the name of the original Buchanan, and nearly a third of the remainder the name Ledford. In considering the numerous offspring of these two leading families, it is well to bear in mind the many epileptics found in this district; also the exceptional thrift evident in the homes, without doubt an hereditary characteristic. With the increase of population, and the wearing out or washing

away of what little soil they ever possessed, was presented the problem facing them all, how to make a living. That is the mountain problem.

As we finally rode out of the district, taking our way down stream, my farmer assistant exclaimed:

"What is to become of these poor people? They can't possibly make a living much longer in there."

The answer was on a schedule, the very first I had obtained of a family leaving that part of the country for a cotton-mill. It told of Leroy Buchanan, as reported by his cousin Adam. Leroy's family consisted of wife, three boys and two girls. They lived in a single room log cabin, and were tenant farmers; very poor and in debt. Autumn came finding them with insufficient corn to carry them through the winter. They were good honest folks, standing well in the community, but they were facing hunger and want. They listened to a labor agent who told them of the advantages to be secured at the cotton-mills and so they sold what little stuff they had, to pay their debts, and accepting transportation from the labor agent, they went away to the mills. That was eight years before.

The schedule shows that Adam, who makes the report, did not know to what mill they went, but now "they are at Gaffney, South Carolina," and inquiry fourteen on the schedule says that "their condition has improved very much," and finally Adam makes the following statement:

"Leroy visited the folks here about a year ago; he said he would like to return for good, but his children would not listen to it because they lived so much better, and were so much better off than formerly." As evidence of the greater prosperity at the cotton-mills, Adam said, he heard Leroy say that he had given in one hundred dollars of his savings for taxation, and the assessors had said, "we don't take no account of such small amounts as that." The report concludes with the statement that "the children worked in the mills, then went to school, and the oldest boy has graduated from High School."

In this case, Leroy had solved the mountain problem.

CHAPTER XXVI.

SOME INCIDENTS OF MOUNTAIN TRAVEL.

HAVING selected several agents by correspondence, it was incumbent upon me to ride over the territory assigned them, with the view of seeing for myself the conditions, and to assure myself also that the work was being properly done. One of the townships under investigation was remote from my headquarters, and in selecting it I was guided by the fact that I did not know anything about the conditions there, and therefore did not have any idea what the investigation would develop. To do the schedule work for it, I was fortunate in securing the assistance of two young men, born and reared in the county, and who knew in a general way the conditions of the people. One of these young men was a farm boy, who had worked his way through college, and did most satisfactory work.

In one corner of Tennessee, I secured the services of a clergyman and missionary worker, with whom I had stopped on my previous investigation. Although he had declared himself prejudiced against factory employment, and did not believe that the conditions of the families leaving the mountains for the mills could be improved in any way by the change, in availing myself of his services I was satisfied of his integrity and good judgment. In taking up the work he acknowledged his inability to collect the information required on the schedules, and consequently recommended to me an old tax assessor to do it, who practically knew every family and every family history for miles around. I gladly accepted the services of this old mountaineer under the supervision of the

clergyman. Daily the old fellow trudged over the mountains, carrying his schedule blanks in a canvas bag suspended from his shoulder, visiting the families, and setting down the information as obtained. As he completed the schedules he returned to the clergyman, who would study them for omissions or inconsistencies, and suggest corrections. Frequently the old tax assessor, who had also been a schoolmaster, would have to make a second visit to some of the families, to straighten out some indefinite or inconsistent statement, after which the completed data were finally revised and forwarded to me for further revision and criticism.

In supervising the work in these widely-separated parts of the mountains, I spent nine consecutive days in the saddle riding almost constantly. This journey in particular was replete with interest, often punctuated with amusing, serio-comic incidents, and even tragedy. It was undertaken when the roads were in a very bad condition, and in starting out I was obliged to traverse a section of the country where for miles the mud was almost up to my horse's belly. The first day out, I did not find shelter until far into the night, but I saw that Rubberneck did not go without her supper, although I was obliged to go without mine, or at least I insisted upon going without it because I did not want to trouble the family taking me in any more than necessary.

The tiresomeness of this floundering through mud was relieved on one occasion, by an apparition coming down the hill at the end of the road in front of me. It appeared like a veritable Santa Claus, only he was dressed in black instead of the conventional red of that personage, and was astride a mule. There seemed to be nothing but whiskers under the broad hat he wore, but as the mule splashed towards me, eyes developed under extraordinary long, gray eyebrows, and there was a red nose sticking out amidst the surrounding white of whiskers and moustache. As he passed me, the face upturned, the whiskers and moustache parted, and a resonant voice said cheerfully .

“Hain’t yer tired ’or this yer swimmin’, Mister?”

On another occasion I was the cause of considerable excitement due to its being reported that I was drowned in a swollen, treacherous creek, where another had been drowned before under similiar circumstances. As I attempted to ford the creek, I saw a horseman on the opposite bank, calling and gesticulating. Whatever he said was lost amid the roar of the foaming stream. The next moment I realized that Rubberneck was in the midst of a treacherous pool without any foothold, and I was getting a bath, the first I had had since leaving Washington. As my faithful filly struck out bravely, however, I guided her gently, turning her head up stream. She understood, and facing about boldly, she breasted the foaming torrent, striking out with all her might, bringing herself upon a more secure footing midst the stones and boulders higher up. We were still on the same side of the stream, but I was discouraged from making any further attempt to cross it. I took another road, changing my route entirely, so that the happy termination of my plunge into the treacherous pool was hidden by an under-growth of brush and trees, from the man who had been warning me. My non-apperance on the opposite bank caused him to spread the alarm that I was drowned, and a dead “Government man” was looked for farther down stream.

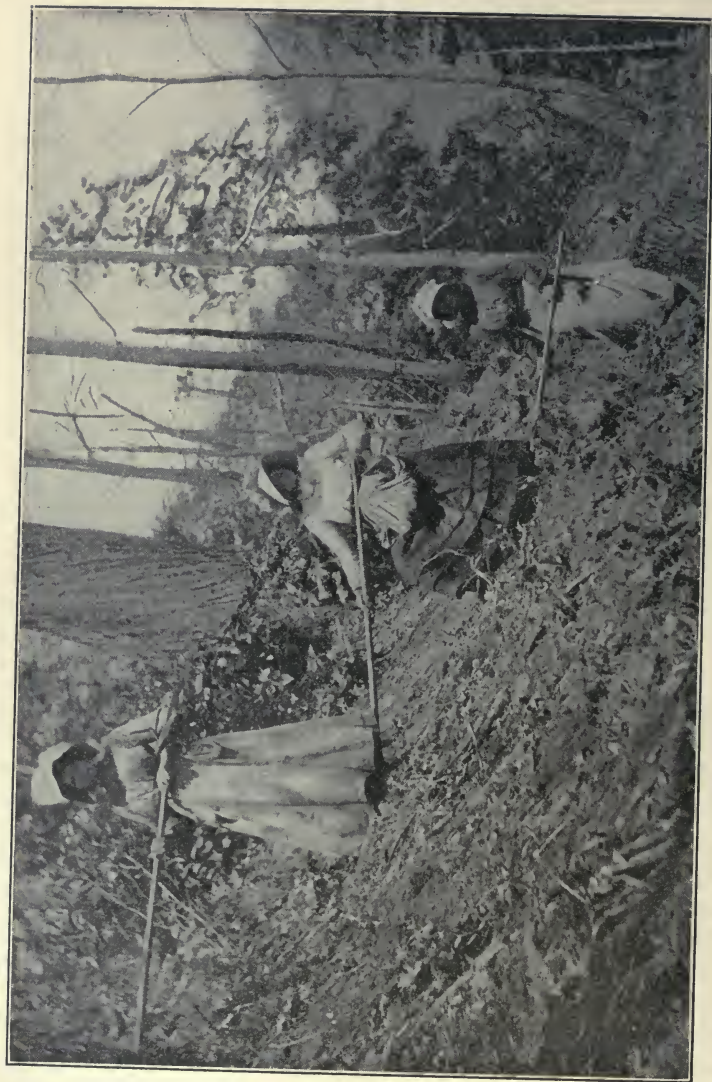
There were occasions when I was obliged to ride far into the night, and frequently to miss meals, but as I was an experienced campaigner, such incidents, although annoying and uncomfortable at times, worked little hardship on me. What I dreaded most was the cold, for most of my campaigning had been done in the tropics; but I soon found that I suffered less from the cold than I had anticipated.

After journeying across a vast range of mountain country, I once more found myself at Marshall, greeted by the many friends of my former investigation. From Marshall I proceeded with a young man, whom I had already engaged to assist me, to look over the work in the remote township already

referred to. He was a civil engineer, a member of an old Southern family, and a good comrade, but little versed in taking care of himself or his horse, when thrown upon his own resources. He was greatly interested in the work, and together we rode over hills, floundered through mud and climbed high mountain ranges. Our first dinner was at a cabin where the mother of two half-scared, tangle-haired, grown daughters, prepared the meal while we looked on curiously. She swabbed out the frying-pan in which she cooked the biscuits, with a piece of fat pork, and she boiled a mess of sour cabbage that made the place smell as bad as a limburger cheese factory.

In answer to my inquiries she said she was the mother of seventeen children, only three of whom she had "raised," the two girls, still at home, and another one who had married, and was living near the top of the mountain with her husband, a young fellow who had come up from the other side of the mountain, had courted her, and marrying her had taken her away. He did not have a stick of furniture to put into the empty cabin which he took possession of upon marrying the girl, nor money to buy a peck of meal. But his father-in-law had helped him out with meal and furniture, and there the fellow was with his wife and two or three children already born into the world. We subsequently saw the children, standing in the door of the miserable cabin, draped in dirty rags.

In telling of the deaths of her children, the mother cooking our dinner said that they had died in infancy from a disease known in that part of the country as "bowl-hives." I was unable to ascertain what the disease was, as no one seemed to know, but the number of babies reported as dying with it was appalling. A local physician, who was a graduate in medicine, said he did not know what the disease was himself, but he thought it was due to a sudden decay of the child's liver. He mentioned having delivered perfectly healthy babies, and after a few weeks or a few months of apparently healthy life, they would seem to simply collapse and die. I considered these infant mortality statistics as I collected them in this particular



GIRLS ON A MOUNTAIN FARM PLANTING CORN

"Where the fields are so steep, a dog in treeing a 'possum has to dig a hole in order to look up to bark." These girls were unmarried, yet two of them were mothers. They were planting the corn for the owner of the land with the understanding that they could have as much of the harvest as they might require for their subsistence.

section of the country, a valuable piece of work in itself, and a most useful contribution to science, if I had been allowed to make them public.

While in the selection of this particular territory for my investigation I had been guided by the mere fact that I did not have even an inkling of the conditions that would be found, it proved to have a most important bearing upon the investigation as a whole, due to the general poverty among the people, the criminal tendencies among some of them, particularly within well-defined localities, and the fact that many of them had gone to the cotton-mills where they had already made good or were making good.

It is doubtful whether there was a wheeled vehicle in the country except possibly in the valleys. All necessary hauling was done on sledges of the very rudest kind of construction, drawn by a harnessed bull or a broken-down nag, or, as I saw in one instance, a miserable old donkey harnessed up with a hornless cow.

A young schoolmaster, who was engaged to teach one of the district schools, related how he had withstood an all-night siege by the young mountain hoodlums who had conspired to run him out of the place. They waylaid him at early dusk, and began their assault by "heaving rocks" at him. The teacher having provided himself with a revolver, and evidently an adequate supply of ammunition, backed into a retreat whence his tormentors could make their assault only on his front. With a cool head, and grim determination, he watched from his point of vantage, for the appearance of a head or a rock, and he did his level best to bring down a foe as fast as one appeared, but with what success he was unable to say. He averred, however, that the services of a physician were subsequently in demand. The enemy, however, did not raise the siege until morning, when the besieged schoolmaster cautiously advanced until he found the field clear.

"And," said he in concluding his story, "they didn't run me out either. I stayed with them and finished out my term."

My assistant in writing up his locality report for this district, mentioned among other peculiarities of the people, that of young married men in setting up housekeeping seeking a cabin as far away from their neighbors as they could get. If there wasn't an unoccupied cabin that suited them already in existence, they would put up one, and these very frequently like the sledges used by their parents, who usually had a little



HOME OF YOUNG MARRIED COUPLE

In such a home they set up housekeeping, often scarcely without a stick of furniture, and there they begin the rearing of children ignorant and without opportunities to improve.

more than they had, were of the rudest kind. Their diet consisted almost exclusively of coarsely-ground, unsifted corn-meal and fat, salt pork. Either due to ignorance, habit or the lack of seeds, they rarely had a vegetable garden. It was estimated that the average yield of corn for a family was fifty bushels, but many of the families fell far short of this amount.

My two assistants at work where such conditions as these prevailed, were so affected in one instance, where they found a

mother and six children without a particle of food, that they suspended operations at once. The mother was grubbing with some kind of an instrument, preparatory to planting corn. She said her husband had been killed in a fight on the other side of the mountain in Tennessee, and she was dependent on corn from neighbors, to carry her along till she could get some out of the ground. My assistants left her, and riding more than twenty miles to their homes, at Hot Springs, they presented the case to their friends, and to guests at the hotel. A collection was taken up, and not only money, but clothing was contributed for them to take to this family. Returning over the mountains again, they gave the mother the clothing and seven dollars in money. The woman was so overcome at the unexpected gift that tears gathered in her eyes. Her voice trembled as she said the money was more than she had ever had in her possession before.

Another pitiful case described by one of these same agents, was that of a family found in an isolated cabin at the end of a narrow trail leading from the highway. The cabin was a wretched affair. Within, the father was sitting on one side of the fireplace nursing a broken arm. On the other side was the mother huddled up, and between the two were the children toasting themselves in front of the fire, first on one side and then on the other. The wind blew and whistled outside, and the falling snow was blown into the cabin in fitful gusts. Their only food was corn-meal baked in the fireplace, and they did not have much of that.

On the main highway I met a jovial sort of fellow riding a good horse, with a bag of meal that he had just had ground. He answered my salutations in the friendliest sort of manner, and reined up to talk. He lived up the mountain, he said, near the Haywood County line, and as I asked him how the folks were getting on up there, he answered,

"They are getting along tolerably well; corn hasn't given out yet."

"Making any money?" I asked.

"Money!" he exclaimed quickly, "we never see any money up where I am."

Hot Springs has an elaborate hotel with a park and beautiful grounds. One of the first mountain mission schools was established at this place, and under the management of its originator it grew and developed into an institution of considerable size. But I found persons right in Hot Springs who failed to see any good work in particular that the institute had done. A few had availed themselves of its educational advantages, as it gave an easy and economical means to those who could afford to pay for their children's education, but the problem that faced even the educated ones was what to do to make a living. This was exemplified in the case of my assistants, two educated and able young men, who were glad to do work necessitating hardship and privations for what would be considered elsewhere an insignificant amount.

My only way out of Hot Springs in the direction I wanted to go was by a mere path through woods and thickets, scarcely penetrable in places. My companion from Marshall remained with me until passing through these woods we found ourselves upon the Laurel River. There we separated, he returning to Marshall, and I pursuing my way up the river into Tennessee to look over the work being done by my friend, the clergyman.

I stopped for the night with a well-to-do farmer, who had recently lost his eldest son and main-stay, treacherously assassinated as the result of a feud quarrel. The farmer was seated on the side porch of his house reading his Bible, the evening being Sunday. I found him a talkative, red-whiskered little man of about my own age, but by comparison it seemed to me that I was quite a young fellow, and he an old man. In closing his Bible to talk to me, he referred to his reading it as the only thing he ever read, and that very poorly, until the Spanish-American war. Upon the breaking out of the war, he became so greatly interested in it that he subscribed for a paper or two, and read everything he could get hold of.

"My," said he, "I didn't know there was so much to be learned by reading. When I commenced. I could hardly spell out the words, but now I can read first-rate.

"You see, when I war a boy, we didn't have no schools 'round here. There wasn't much else but woods. No roads—nuthin' but trails through the woods. We didn't grow nuthin' but corn in the patches between the woods, an' the folks who made more corn then they could eat, made whiskey. Then the Government got after them for makin' the whiskey, an' I s'pose it was jes' as well, for the whiskey was responsible for a heap o' trouble—lots o' shootin' an' killin', yer know."

And then he proceeded to tell me about the killing of his son, who had left his home one Sunday evening and was brought back a few hours later dead, shot from ambush.

"I hain't 'zactly got over it yet," said he in concluding the episode, "an' I don't 'spose I will, for it makes me feel so discouraged like. He war such a good boy, an' such a help ter me, now that I war pretty well fixed and felt like having a good rest.

"I worked pretty hard in my time. My father war killed when I war a small boy, shot dead in his own cabin, an' my mother had ter bound me out. I worked hard an' saved forty dollars. Thet war all the money I had to commence with. They had jes' started tobacco growin' here then, an' I put all my money in plantin' tobacco. I cleared the first year one hundred an' twenty dollars. This gave me a good start, an' with the money I made from my tobacco, I brought the first sawmill into this country we ever hed. I couldn't read or write none, but I had ter learn ter cipher with that sawmill o' mine, an' I learned ter read some."

This interesting character put me up for the night in his best room, and the next morning when I went to pay him he said,

"I don't make no practice of chargin' no one what comes along ter stay with me over night, but if you think a quarter is about right it's all right.

From this man's house I very soon struck a section of country that I was already familiar with, having traversed it during my first investigation. Crossing to where the final ascent of the Smokies begins by a trail into Tennessee, I reined up at the teacher's cottage where the Presbyterian Board of Home Missions has one of its educational plants. The cottage nestled in a shady grove 'midst great, gray boulders. Hastily dismounting I knocked at the door. My knock was answered by a mission worker from New York, a graduate in medicine, who seemed very glad that I had called. She placed a seat for me by her cheering fire, urging me to remain and partake of her chicken dinner. The invitation was tempting, but I could not stop, for I was obliged to reach the other side of the mountain before nightfall.

In my hasty interview with this good lady, she did not disguise the fact that she was very much discouraged with her mission work. She touched upon the immoral conditions, and complained because the children would not attend school. While they appeared to be bright enough, she said, they did not want to study, and then, she could not get any of them to take a job, though she sometimes needed their work so much. They were the proudest and most independent people in the world, she said.

As she accompanied me to the gate, she asked in a most hopeless sort of way,

"Couldn't the Government send an expert down here to show them how to make better crops?"

I looked around at the huge boulders covering the ground, and thought of the surrounding fields so steep, as the people themselves described them, that a dog in treeing a 'possum has to dig a hole in order to look up to bark. I suggested that under such conditions the natives would have to teach the expert.

"Well, I'll admit," replied the good woman, looking at the big boulders too, "there isn't much chance of growing anything around here, but then, what are we to do for these poor people? We must do something for them."

Then after a pause, her face brightened up with a new idea.

"Couldn't the Government send somebody to show them how to improve their stock?"

"Improve their stock!" I exclaimed. "How are you going to improve their stock when they don't own so much as a nanny goat!"

The good lady was in despair.

"Then what shall we do?" she cried.

"Build them a cotton-mill, and give them a job," said I, mounting my horse.

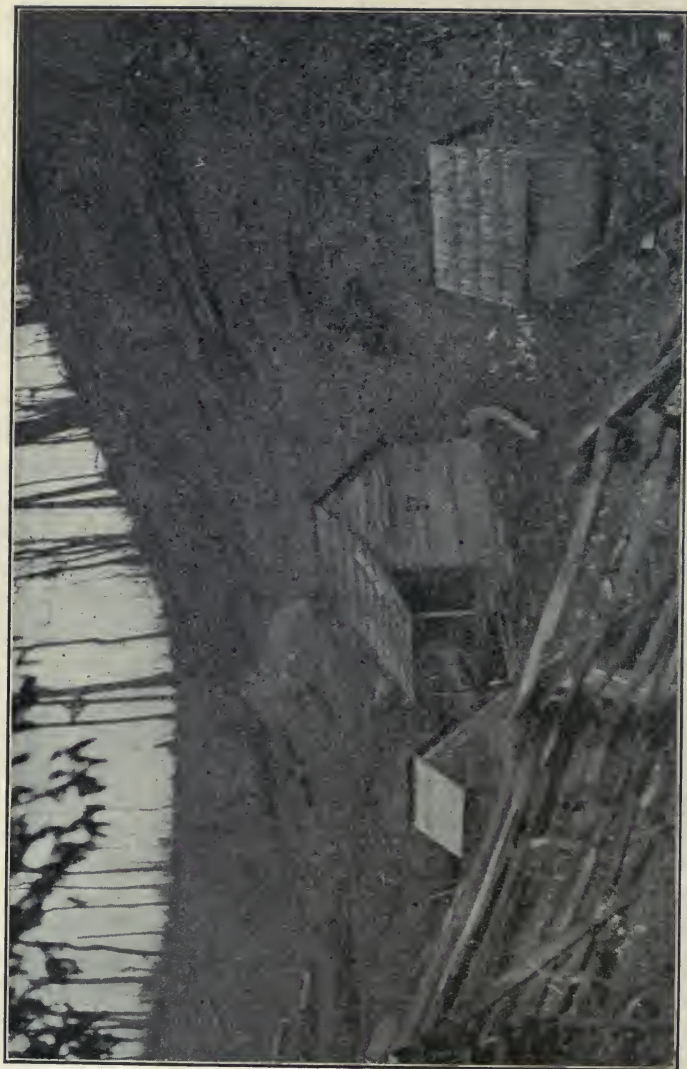
With an adieu, I left her fairly gasping with astonishment.

Build them a cotton-mill! The despised cotton-mill! That was too much.

I journeyed on up the mountain, and down again to the house of the clergyman who had charge of the work in his part of Tennessee. I found him greatly enthused in his part of the work as it was progressing. He declared the schedules were the most complete things he had ever thought of for collecting information, and he confessed that he had not realized the extent of the poverty and ignorance that existed until seeing it recorded in a systematic manner on the schedules.

After looking over the work in this locality, I left the clergyman, taking my way once more up the Great Smokies back into North Carolina. As I rode up the mountain, the report of a gun sounded a little ahead of me. Presently I passed a red cow, and a little farther on an old felt hat and a red bandana handkerchief lying in the road attracted my attention. Crossing the divide I looked around for a cabin in which I had heard it stated that an old woman lived with her two daughters and a grand-daughter, and sold illicit whiskey. Her ill repute was known for miles around. She was so big and fat, the story went, that whenever the Sheriff went to arrest her, she sat down on the floor of her cabin and with arms folded, said,

"I reckon yer kin take me if yer want 'er."



DISREPUTABLE HOUSE NEAR THE TENNESSEE LINE

Near which Bill Anders was ambushed and shot. The house was occupied by an old woman, her two daughters and granddaughter. The old woman sold illicit whiskey. Her ill repute was known far and wide.

And the Sheriff, after surveying the situation, walking around her once or twice, would conclude that she was too heavy a burden even for him to assume.

As I failed to see the cabin as described, I reined up at a plain board structure out of which two men came with a stumbling gait towards me.

"There's a feller in thar what's been shot," said one of them, pointing to the house.

"Is he badly hurt?" I asked.

"He says he's all shot to pieces an' is goin' ter die."

I went into the house, and there, stretched out on the floor with his feet to the fire, was a man groaning and shivering and crying. He was shot in the left shoulder and his coat and sleeve were covered with blood. I bent down and examined his wound. A load of small shot fired at close range, had blown a big hole in his arm just where it enters the socket joint.

"I am freezing to death! I am going to die!" he cried.

The man had evidently lost his nerve, if he ever had any, and as a scolding is the best thing to reassure a man in his condition, I told him to shut up, that he wasn't going to die at all, and I got his story. His name was Bill Anders. He said he was driving the old red cow across the divide into Tennessee; had just crossed the State line when Lifus Pate jumped out from behind the big buck-eye tree and shot him. Lifus had threatened to get even with him some time before, because it was reported that he had appeared against him in an indictment at the county-seat, Lifus being charged with illicit relations with one of the daughters of the old woman living in the cabin I had been looking for. The wounded man had armed himself with a revolver, after hearing of Lifus' threat, but Lifus had ambushed him, and shot him so quickly he forgot about his weapon of defense. Yelling like an Indian he had reached the house where he collapsed.

There was a telephone line over the mountain by which the family were able to summon a doctor. I waited to be of

such assistance as I might be on the doctor's arrival. In the meantime neighbors gathered around, some of them with guns, seating themselves silently on the fence in the front of the house.

The doctor came, and after we had laid Bill on the table by the light of a narrow window, and he had probed the wound with his finger, he said Bill's arm would have to come off.

"Well, then, let's take it off," said I.

"I've got to go back and get my tools," replied the doctor.

And so poor Bill was left while the doctor went back for his instruments. He returned the next morning, cut off Bill's arm, and Bill died.

As there was nothing more for me to do, after the doctor left, I proceeded on down the mountain, near the foot of which I stopped at a store owned by the man who did the shooting. He was a merchant in good standing, financially. His wife, a fat woman with snappy black eyes and black hair, greeted me, wanting to know what I knew about the report that her husband had shot Bill Anders. I told her that Bill told me that her husband had shot him from behind the big buck-eye tree, but I believed if Bill had proper treatment he would pull through all right. She was more interested, however, in the evidence that could be brought against her husband for the shooting. She did not hesitate to say that if Bill had only been killed outright "there wouldn't be no chance o' Bill's lying about it, and saying her husband did it."

"He had no gun when he left here," she finally added.

I stopped a little farther on with one of the most substantial and influential citizens in that locality. He told me that Lifus was of a family, members of which were notorious for their blood-thirsty tendencies. One, while drunk, had chased a little boy around a stump with his pistol until tired, and had then shot him dead. Another had shot a woman under most revolting circumstances, for which crime he was still serving time on the chain-gang, although several petitions had been sent to the Governor praying for his pardon.

He told further how Lifus Pate's paramour had come down to the store about Christmas time, to do some trading. Pate's wife was behind the counter, and by force of habit, she began waiting on the woman. But her jealous ire rising until she could restrain herself no longer, she seized a pistol, and waddling out from behind the counter as fast as she could, she planted herself in front of the slender form of the other woman, cursing her as she did so. The other one quickly whipped out a revolver, too, and pressing close up to the rotund form confronting her, hurled back a defiant oath. Then the two women firmly grasping their revolvers began shooting into the floor, as peering into each other's faces, they interspersed imprecations and oaths between each revolver shot. Not until they had emptied their revolvers into the floor, did the men folks shuffle into the store and separate the unhappy belligerents.

I selected this district to be worked out in detail with the schedules. One of its striking developments was a family known as "little eyed Madcaps," the name Madcap being a corruption of the family name Metcalf. It was said that wherever there was a drop of this Metcalf blood, the individual possessing it was marked by a drooping of the eyelids, in extreme cases the person afflicted being scarcely able to raise his eyelids at all. With that sense for the humorous so characteristic of the people, it was said that some of these Metcalfs, in order to see at all, were obliged to lie on their backs and look up.

A schedule was obtained from one of these Metcalf families that had been to the cotton-mills. The family consisted of father, mother and nine children. A photograph was obtained of the father and two of the children, showing the marked peculiarity of the eyelids, as also a group of four other children, one of whom was a Metcalf boy so badly afflicted that he could scarcely raise his eyelids at all. The family was living in a poorly-built house of one-inch, upright boards, divided into three rooms, without windows. The furniture



THE "LITTLE EYED MADCAPS"

Father and two of his children. It was said that wherever there was a drop of this Metcalf blood, the individual was marked with the peculiar eyes.

was described as fair, being distinguished by "five very nice oak beds bought while at the cotton-mill, one table and a few chairs." Shoes and clothing — "Poor. All very dirty and ragged. All the children under twelve have been barefooted all winter. Father very ragged and nearly barefooted."

The only one in the family claiming to be able to read and write was the eldest daughter Cora, aged twenty-one. A postal photograph was obtained of her taken while at the



SOME OF THE CHILDREN

The boy is hardly able to raise his eyelids at all.

mill, showing her improved appearance, and while a photograph of the entire family or any of the other numbers at the mill, was unobtainable, the mother said they all dressed as well as Cora, "but here they are all dirty and ragged, and haven't anything fit to wear. They don't go to church because they are ashamed of their clothes."

Cora, after returning from the mills, refused to remain at home, and the schedule shows her as working for a doctor at Mars Hill. The ration bill showed a weekly consumption of "one and a half bushels of meal at seventy-five cents a bushel;

flour none, because unable to buy any; pork one dollar a week; fresh beef none; coffee fifty cents per week; sugar, none; molasses, none; lamp oil, ten cents per week; tobacco, fifty cents per week; snuff, ten cents per week; soap, none; salt, five cents per month, and soda, five cents per month."

This ration bill was supplemented with "milk and butter from the cow up to the past two months when the cow went dry." "No poultry or eggs, but wife put up ten quarts of berries that are all gone now."

asker Dear Brother
 I will give you for
 sister Cora's picture
 You must think
 at me

SPECIMEN OF CORA'S HANDWRITING

The only one in the family of eleven persons claiming to be able to read and write. Copied from the back of her postal photograph taken at the cotton-mill.

Financial condition reported as "bad, but not in debt because they can't get credit."

The ration bill was verified by the neighboring store-keeper who furnished the supplies, and was paid for in work, the father and three eldest sons cutting logs by contract to the amount of two hundred dollars. The summary of expenditures for the year showed two dollars and twenty-two cents paid for taxes, (exempt from road and poll-tax). Eighteen dollars went for shoes and clothing; one hundred sixty-nine dollars and ninety cents, for rations, and twenty dollars was paid for the cow.



CORA AT THE COTTON-MILL

The photograph was taken on a postal card within a few months after the family moved to the cotton-mill. The mother said they all dressed as well as Cora at the mill.

The schedule concluded with the following interesting statement:

"This family has always lived in the mountains and almost in poverty, except nearly a year spent at the cotton-mills, and the following is a statement from them:

"November 5, 1907, they went to Inman, South Carolina, to work in the Inman Mills, as they had heard from their friends who were already there, that they could make more and live much easier than in the mountains. They sold their cow in order to pay their expenses to the mill, and they arrived there with nothing. The father and four eldest children got work the next day in the mill, father receiving seventy-five cents per day, and children sixty cents per day each. The children worked regularly until May 10, 1908, but father who is no account, only worked forty days, his earnings amounting to thirty dollars. Then he only worked now and then, so the children had to support the family. As they learned the work, their wages were raised so their earnings while there averaged fifteen dollars per week, for the four, making sixty dollars per month. Their expenses were as follows:

"Rent for nice four-room house, two dollars per month; fuel, three dollars per month, and rations including meal, flour, and vegetables, also fresh meats, beef, etc., forty dollars, leaving fifteen dollars per month to buy clothes. They bought while there, very nice furniture, including a stove. They lived in a house much better than any they had ever been accustomed to. They had plenty of everything to eat, and plenty of good clothes; while here they lived in a very poor house, and, as has been shown, have only fat meat and corn-bread to eat, and are almost naked.

"The children were all well satisfied and wanted to stay at the mill, but father is no account, and wanted to come back to the mountains, where he can lie around idle. The children told assistant that they liked the work at the mill, as it was easy, and that they had better health there than here, as they

were not exposed to the weather, and had plenty of clothes to keep them warm.

"The father told assistant that the cotton-mill was the only place for a poor man, and that he was a fool for ever coming back."

An interesting item reported by one of my assistants from this same district was that concerning his stay over night with the father of one of the Pates. He was the father of the one who had killed the woman under revolting circumstances, and was still serving time for it. The old man was a kindly old fellow, and as he carried the mail, my assistant thought his home would be a good place to stop over night. The old man did not make the slightest objection to taking him along, but upon entering the house, his wife seeing that he had company, drawled,

"Now, I should be ashamed of myself ter bring company home with me, an' not hev nuthin' mor' ter eat than yer've got."

To which the old man replied,

"I reckon he kin make out one night on what I hev to put up with all the time."

Their supper followed, consisting of a bread made with flour and water, seemingly without leaven; two pieces of fat pork about two inches square; a bowl of thin gravy, and water to drink in abundance. The old man had a little ginger tea especially prepared for him, which he divided with my assistant, who said he could barely taste the ginger. At the table, besides the old man and his guest, was his son-in-law, and wife, his own wife and baby, and two children. My assistant said that to eat any of the stuff on that table seemed to him like depriving the others of their share.

CHAPTER XXVII.

EGYPT.

THE Big Bald rises above the irregular range of the Smoky Mountains to an altitude of nearly six thousand feet. From the top of Big Bald the descent is precipitous to a narrow valley some three thousand feet below, a valley so narrow as to be scarcely more than a ravine hemmed in by another precipitous range rising to some five thousand feet. Through the narrow valley roars incessantly a wild mountain stream, into which tumble other streams that have corrugated the steep mountain-sides deeply. Lines drawn along the respective summits of the two ranges hemming in this narrow valley, mark the boundaries of a township in Yancey county, known as Egypt.

My attention was attracted to this township by the various stories related about it and its people. Its principal citizen was described as a sort of baron, who owned pretty much everything in the township that was worth owning, and he was not only a pater familias, but a father of several families.

The story was told that having lost his wife, and being very much in need of another one, his many children getting somewhat mixed up, he went to a field where a woman was ploughing. Looking over the fence, as she came driving her plough steadily along turning up a furrow close to the fence, he said,

"Sue Maria, you jes go down ter the store, an' git yerself a pair of shoes, an' we'll git married."

This baron, however, had several stalwart sons and daughters that were a credit to the country. One of them was

County Clerk, I believe, and another one was a clerk in the county bank, while a third was attending the Academy at the county-seat. They all displayed a willingness to help me with my work, and they laughed heartily at some of the conditions and the tales told about the people in Egypt, telling some of them themselves. It was said that even in appearance they differed so much from other mountaineers that on court days, when everybody came flocking into town, they were easily recognized as coming from Egypt. One of their distinguishing marks seemed to be a partiality for gaily-colored cloth, displayed by the women for example in the selection of their skirts, and by the men in their display of a handkerchief, or something of the kind.

I selected two of my agents for working out this township at the county-seat. One of them was a young man studying engineering at the Academy. His father was an influential citizen and merchant, and the family had been one of the most important ones in the county. The first of them was Sheriff in the days when the Sheriff ran the affairs of the county about to suit himself, and, it was related, the circuit judges were afraid to hold court. He allowed his sons to grow up believing that they should let nothing stand in the way of their doing about as they pleased, with the result, one of them shot his own brother dead. He was not punished for this crime because it was shown at the trial that his brother attacked him first, throwing stones at him, and he had warned him that if he threw another stone he would shoot. He killed two other men for each of which crimes he was convicted, sent to prison and pardoned by the Governor. He then went west, shot a man dead in Colorado, and was serving a life-term sentence at the time of my employing his nephew.

The other agent employed for the work in Egypt, was a young man home from college, due to ill health. Together, the three of us set out from the county-seat, our horses floundering through mud for a mile or two until we struck a hard trail very much to the relief of ourselves and horses. We

traversed a part of the country I was familiar with, having previously visited it, and took dinner with the Confederate veteran mentioned in my first investigation. A little beyond this well-to-do farmer's house, our climb up Sampson Mountain began. The broad, undulating fields of the valley sprinkled with farms and farm-houses, were left behind us as we ascended a creek having some such name as Lick Skillet. Both sides of the creek were thickly populated, though there did not seem to be much available land for cultivation anywhere around.

At the top of Sampson Mountain a grand view of the opposite range with the Great Bald rising like a round head above it, greeted us. Just below the gap, where we crossed the divide was a rude cabin almost under an overhanging precipice. We were told that the father of the family in this cabin, was so lazy that when the last blizzard came, sending the thermometer down to ten below zero, he froze, trying to cut down an apple-tree for fire wood, the nearest thing to his cabin. Upwards of a dozen children were said to be his, and as we looked down from the overhanging ledge as we rode along, we saw several of them, poor, ragged little things, in their shirt-like gowns, gazing up at us wonderingly.

The descent of the mountain was quite steep. As we neared the bottom, the cabins were thicker and thicker until they appeared almost everywhere. A comparatively young man who had been employed by a lumber company in the exploitation of the forests on the steep mountain-sides, seemed to have liked the place, for he had remained, and was just finishing a frame house, the only one of the kind in Egypt. He declared that the cabin dwellers around were very poor because they would not work. On the other hand, as we proceeded with our investigation, some of the cabin dwellers referred to, stoutly asserted that there was no work to be had, and in the case of the young man referred to having anything for them to do, he would not pay for it when he had. All they could get in return for their work, was tobacco or

corn. He bought their corn from them at fifty cents a bushel in the fall, and sold it back to them in the spring at one dollar.

At the bottom of the gorge-like valley between the two mountain ranges, we followed the Big Bald Creek to the home of the Baron. Two lady-like young women, bright and vivacious, greeted us in the yard of the rambling, old-fashioned, one-storied structure, the Baron's home. The two young ladies were his daughters. They knew my assistants and welcoming them, they extended me a friendly greeting. They gave us possession of the end-most room of the house, which I judged was the best, and there we established our headquarters. One of the Baron's younger sons joined us, and ascertaining that he had just finished a business course at Knoxville, I added him to my staff.

The Baron, in whom I was greatly interested, owing to the tales told of him, did not appear until nearly dark. He appeared as a quiet, taciturn man, but it was evident he was a strong character. His name was Hensley, which was the predominating family name in Egypt, indicating that he as well as some of the most poverty-stricken cabin dwellers in the township were of the same origin. He told me that he had commenced working as a poor boy, and he proposed to keep on working to the end. His stalwart frame and upwards of seventy years, with an activity and vigor surpassing anything recognizable as such in the many cabin dwellers surrounding him, were pretty good proof that hard work is anything but deteriorating to the human frame and mind. If further evidence of this were necessary, it existed in the presence of a young mother with a robust infant, which its half-sisters, the Baron's two bright, vivacious daughters, played with and fondled joyously.

Every morning before daylight the Baron was up routing his somewhat spoiled son, whom I had engaged to assist me, out of bed. He would then come into the room, occupied as our headquarters, and lighting a fire in the fireplace, call to

my other two assistants in one of the beds, and then seating himself on or near my bed, he would display a kindly affectionate nature that lay under his hard, taciturn exterior. He would converse with me to the extent that in these still, early morning hours, as the fire crackled up the chimney, he would become talkative. I am not aware that he ever ate any breakfast, for by the time we were up and eating ours, he was making his way down the creek that roared eternally by, to his store two miles below. That was his daily exercise—two miles down the creek by daylight, and two miles up again at dusk. His trading consisted chiefly of swapping snuff and tobacco for roots dug in the mountains around, though remarkable to relate, he never used any of the snuff or tobacco himself. To his chagrin, however, his spoiled son fairly ate it, biting off a big mouthful from an ever-ready plug, like a New England school-boy eating pie.

In discussing local conditions with me, he declared that, generally it was the people's own fault for being miserably poor. Many of them would not work, he said, when they could get a great deal more out of the ground than they actually did. He criticised the Federal Government's action in paying pensions to alleged soldiers of the civil war who had never shouldered a gun in actual conflict. It was reported that after one of these pensioners had been drawing a pension for a number of years, the discovery was made by Federal officers that he had actually served in a Confederate regiment. Other pensioners, he said, would not do a blessed thing but loaf around, living on what their pension checks would bring them at his store. Of course he got their pension money, but he thought the pensioners would be better off if obliged to work for what they got.

I began my work in Egypt, guided by the Baron's son up a narrow tributary of the main creek, with the Big Bald looming above us. The first abode at which we stopped, far up on the mountain, was a double log cabin that had evidently seen better days. One of its two rooms was occupied by a family

of women and children. As we entered they were just finishing breakfast. Cracked cups and a broken saucer or two were on the table; a plate or two, a coffee-pot, and remnants of corn-bread—a few broken pieces, scarcely more than crumbs—and that was all. Black coffee slopped over in the saucers from the cups, indicated that the family cow, chewing dried cornstalks in the muddy yard fronting the cabin, had gone dry.



"A DOUBLE LOG CABIN THAT HAD SEEN BETTER DAYS"

Occupied by a family of women and children, nearly all of whom were ill or infirm.

The head of the family was an old grandmother, rather portly for a mountain woman. Preliminary to getting the data for my schedule, I handed her a cigar suggesting that she have a smoke. She handled the cigar gingerly, looking it over curiously, and later carefully tucked it away in a recess of the cabin between the logs, and as I watched her, I wondered whether she would eat it later.

The family consisted of her three daughters and five grandchildren. Her eldest daughter, Althea by name, was an

invalid, not having been able to walk in an upright position for nine years.

Patiently I set to work collecting the required data for the schedule. The old woman was able to account for one dollar and thirty-five cents she had made during the year, washing for a neighbor prosperous enough to employ her. Lily and Mary, the other daughters, had washed some, too, and then they had done a certain number of days' work hoeing corn for So-and-so. When I had gotten the number of days down each had worked, and was about to turn them into cash earnings by multiplying them by the wages paid, the old woman exclaimed:

"But we didn't git no money for it, we only got meal. Mary got some salt onct, for her work, and some meat."

The meat was fat pork. Again I set to work to ascertain just how much cash they had handled in the entire year, but it was all meal, fat pork, tobacco and coffee, and a little salt. At last I asked in despair:

"Haven't you seen any money at all?"

"Yaas," drawled the old woman, "we sold our calf an' got four dollars an' fifty cents fer it, didn't we, Althea?" addressing her eldest daughter.

"Yes, mamma," replied Althea, "but we only got fifty cents in money; the rest was in trade."

Then I set to work to figure out what they had gotten in trade. They accounted for eight dollars gone for shoes, having sold some of their corn crop in the fall to pay for them. They hadn't spent a cent for clothing during the year, but they had "picked enough wool on shares to spin and knit their stockings." Their chief expenditure was for tobacco and coffee. They had made twenty-five pounds of tobacco on the "farm," but it was not enough to do them. A ten-cent "tack" of snuff lasted them two weeks. They had "made" fifty bushels of corn, but having had to sell some of it in the fall to buy shoes, it was not enough to last through winter and spring. Thinking of the carbo-hydrates necessary

for the sustenance of the human body and mind, I asked them if they had no sugar.

"We got some onct," said the old woman, "ten cents' worth, we used for sickness."

"Then you had molasses?"

"Yes, we got a leetle molasses. We got two gallons, I reckon in all, over ter Jim McCurray's."

They had had two cows, but one of them had died. They had no poultry, but Althea had recently acquired an old hen and seven chickens. They owned twenty acres of land, and this family with this outfit and property, paid a tax of one dollar and forty-eight cents, and had borrowed the money in order to pay it, on a promise to pay the amount in work.

Althea, the hopeless cripple, was the mother of three of the children. Two were twin boys fourteen years old, and the other was a girl of eight. Both of the twins had recently recovered from typhoid fever, and one was an epileptic. The other child complained of headache most of the time. Their mother never had been married, and although helpless, she displayed a happy and cheerful disposition. Lily, the second daughter at home, was married, but had been separated from her husband five years. She was the mother of the other two children, the youngest being five years and the only one claiming good health in the lot. There was another child on its way, due to arrive in a few weeks.

Leaving this home and family, where the grandmother said they had been growing poorer and poorer as the years went by, we crossed over the headwaters of a branch to the farm of their more prosperous neighbor, Jim McCurray. Through the trees we looked upon the picturesque setting of his log house, with a barn and outhouses.

We found the owner farther up the mountain seated on the ground near a stump watching one of his sons plough, admonishing him as he brought the furrow nearer, to "plough like a gentleman." He proved to be an affable, gentlemanly mountain farmer, and one of the best citizens of Egypt. He



A FARM IN EGYPT

The owner was a gentlemanly, mountain farmer, and one of the best citizens in the township. He owned three hundred acres and admitted having made some money when the township was in a much more prosperous condition.

owned three hundred acres directly under the Big Bald, and admitted having made some money when the township was in a much more prosperous state, due to its invasion by the lumber company which had cut off all the available timber.

I sat on the ground by his side as he told me his story, and I jotted down the data for the schedule. He was suffering from a malady the nature of which he did not know, but evidently it was an affection of the spinal cord in the region of his neck which caused a twitching with a tendency to draw his head around sideways. He suffered constant pain, he said. While he had worked and prospered in his younger days, in reviewing his income and expenditures for the year past, he had fallen behind about fifty dollars.

Of his numerous children, two were born deaf. Now, that the State required all deaf children to be sent to the State deaf and dumb school, the younger of the two had been sent away to that institution. One of his other children was described as being afflicted with a "strange disease," while a fourth had spinal trouble.

It being about noon by the time I had finished his schedule, he invited us down to his log house to have dinner. He put our horses up and fed them, and after dinner we went farther up under the Big Bald on foot, where there was a widow living in a one-room cabin with ever so many children. The cabin was snug and warm, and the widow, about as intelligent a looking woman as I had seen, of her class, was neatly dressed. Seated in the cabin with one of her daughters, she appeared to be making a sun-bonnet. She said her husband had been dead thirteen years, although there were a number of children younger than that scattered around. When I asked her their respective ages, she smiled as she stated them. Two of the children were twins, twelve years old, and the youngest living was seven.

She had other children who were married and gone, and some who were not married. One big son at home had nothing to do, and was trying to get into the army, she said. But

he could not read and write. He didn't see "that it should make any difference 'bout his readin' an' writin', 'c'ause he didn't want ter be no ginerall nohow, an' he could fight all they wanted him to, if they'd only give him a chanct, without any readin' or writin'."

After getting the names and ages of all the living children, the mother gave me the name of one, nine years old, who had been killed in a fight.

"How did that happen?" I asked.

"I let him go down the mountain two miles from here ter school, and Andy Haney hit him on the head with a rock. They brought him home, but he never spoke afterwards. It was a week 'fore he died."

I asked her whether they got a doctor for him, to which she replied,

"We got Doctor Pecks, but he's only a jack-leg doctor. He couldn't do nuthin'."

I finished my morning's work by getting a schedule from a rather good-looking, intelligent man who appeared very anxious to trade some kind of a beast with me for my Rubber-neck. My favorable impression of him, however, was totally demolished that night upon consulting the Baron.

"Why, he's an ex-convict," said he. "It cost me over one hundred and fifty dollars to get him convicted and sent to the chaingang for burning my barn. He's a thief, too, an' his wife an' children won't live with him more 'an half the time."

As the agents on the investigation at the cotton-mills were continually urged to study the moral and social conditions of the employed, with the view of ascertaining the effect of factory employment on them respecting these conditions, it seemed that in all justice to humanity, these conditions should be studied on the farms. Consequently inquiries were provided on the schedule blanks for the purpose of showing the moral and social status of the parents whose children were being reared under their influence. It could not be expected that this information could be obtained from the parents themselves,

although it frequently was. Parents rarely ever hesitated to say whether their children were legitimate or illegitimate, and their social status could generally be sized up by observation, and there was always the good, substantial citizen in the district or township, who would freely supply the information on these points that might not be otherwise ascertained.

In Egypt, the Baron was the last resort for this information. He not only knew every family in the township, but he freely



A FAMILY OF DEAF-MUTES

Many children are born deaf. One family was scheduled in Tennessee having seven children all deaf and dumb.

supplied the required information that we could not otherwise obtain. The result, with what we were able to see and ascertain from the families themselves, was the revelation of a most startling state of affairs, but there were presented many examples of flagrant immorality where the individuals themselves appeared to be wholly unconscious of any wrong doing, particularly in the case of mothers with illegitimate children.

One of the very few exceptions to the general rule in Egypt was that presented by a young man of extraordinary stamina.

He lived in a little white cottage of upright boards, with the strips of batting covering the seams painted blue, giving the whole a gay appearance on its offset, nestling between wood-clad hills.

Climbing down from the load of wood he was hauling, the young man invited us up the steps into the house where his mother, a cheerful, slender, middle-aged woman was bustling away in the kitchen, preparing an unusual and extraordinary variety of food for the noon-day meal.

We were shown into a room by the young man, who seating himself at a little desk in one corner, proceeded to give me the required information for my schedule, fumbling with sundry papers and accounts as he did so. While it was evident that his brawny arms and big hands were more accustomed to wielding an axe than signing papers, he exhibited a check-book and various receipts for bills paid, and was able to give us a successful account of his business transactions. And he had money in the bank.

In reference to his education, he said he had attended the Academy at the county-seat for a term or two. Asked whether he had attended the District school, he replied,

"Oh, yes, but that didn't amount to anything. The teachers were either drunk or asleep half the time."

His father had died when he was eleven years old, and that year he helped his mother put in a crop of corn. While the corn was growing, he obtained employment, and with the help of his mother, he saved his money. As he grew older, he worked harder and saved more money, until finally he was able to pay his way at the Burnsville Academy, and then he was nearly a man grown.

As I completed my schedule and left him, his mother invited us from her place of activity in the kitchen, to remain to dinner. As I thanked her, I felt in my own mind that her son's superiority was not only due to herself in a great measure, but due also to the variety of nourishing food she had evidently habitually prepared for her little family.

"You oughter go up an' see Will Ann Hensley," said the Baron, as I was preparing to leave Egypt. "He's a Hensley, but by Gad, he's no kin o' mine. He won't work, an' I won't own as my kin folks anyone who won't work."

As I took my leave of this old mountain character, whom almost everyone characterized as a selfish old landlord, land grabber, and everything else that was stingy and mean, he revealed the good place way down in his heart which very few



WILL ANN HENSLEY'S NEW HOUSE

It cost nine dollars and twenty-five cents and a family of thirteen persons was living in it.

seemed to know anything about. Upon asking him how much I owed him for taking care of me and my horse, he refused to make any charge at all until assured that the payment did not come out of my own pocket, but went on my expense account to the Department.

"You've been mighty good ter my boy," said he. "You could come an' stop with me as long as you wanted ter, an' I wouldn't never make no account of it."

I left the sturdy old character, taking my way up over Samp-

son Mountain, looking for the new house near the top of the mountain in which I was told I would find Will Ann Hensley and his family. At last I came to it, and was so surprised at the appearance of that new house, that I jumped over the crooked rail-fence in front of it, and addressing the little old man standing by the door, I exclaimed queringly,

"Is this your house? Did you build it? How much did it cost?"

"Yaas, suh, I built it," replied the man, emptying a small bucketful of tobacco juice from his mouth, and then drawling, "Let me see what et did cost."

I pulled out my note-book and sat down in the chair offered me in front of the fireplace, the man's wife seated at the side, raising her head from her hands to regard me with a vacant stare. Her matted brown hair hung down over the sides of her face, while beneath her old and frayed skirt were displayed a pair of thick brogans with red woolen stockings falling down over them. As I looked up at the old man, ready to jot down in my note-book the items of cost that entered into the construction of his new house, he drawled,

"I can come pretty nigh telling yer 'zactly what this house cost. I bought the lumber fer et down wha' they hed the saw-mill at the foot of the mountain. I give six dollars for et."

I jotted down the six dollars.

"You got thet set down?" said he, regarding my operation curiously.

"Yes," said I, "go on."

"Waal, I give two dollars fer a steer ter haul the lumber up hyar. You got thet?"

"Yes; go on."

"I paid fifty cents for nails."

"What next?"

"I bought the old smokestack down ter the sawmill for a chimney fer seventy-five cents, and thet's all."

"Then this house cost you just nine dollars and twenty-five cents," said I, looking around the interior.

The old man followed my gaze, replying,

"Yaas, thet's jes' what it cost," and then looking down at me, "but it tain't worth nine cents." And then he laughed drily at his own version of its value.

The family consisted of the father and mother, eleven children and one grand-child, all living in the one room of the miserable shanty. It contained three beds covered with filthy quilts. The beds were closely packed together. There was one rickety table, and three or four splint-bottomed chairs took up the rest of the floor space, barely allowing enough room for three or four persons to sit by the fireplace at one time. Poked up in one corner on top of a box next the fireplace was a small rusty stove, toy-like in size.

As I proceeded to schedule the family, some of the children gathered around. They couldn't all get into the house at one time unless they climbed upon the beds.

The oldest son stood before me, lean, hump-shouldered, with both hands in his pockets. He drawled out the answers to my questions as I put them to him. He said he was twenty-six years old, and in answer to my question how many days he had worked for wages during the year, he replied that he had not worked any.

"Why don't you work?" I asked.

"Hain't no work 'round hyar."

"Why don't you go where you can get work?"

"Don't wanter go away from home."

"Are you ever sick?"

"I hev' a back-ache sometimes, an' I cough."

"Ever go to school?"

"Nope."

"Why not?"

"Don't know. School no account, I reckon."

And so on I asked the questions and set down the answers, taking each of the children in turn, until the last, when a little one came toddling in the door.

"Where did that child come from?" I asked.

"Hit come down the chimney," answered the old man.

"Whose child is it?"

"Hit's Sal's kid," indicating his ragged daughter.

"Where is its father?"

"Dunno where he is, but I know whar' he oughter be."

And then he expressed himself with an oath, stating where he thought he ought to be, and that was according to the usual idea, in a very warm place.



MAN AND WIFE, AND THEIR HOME

Though the man has not much of anything else, he has a gun.

The amount of corn "made" by this family would have been enough to carry them through the winter and spring, but they had sold about half of it before winter set in, at fifty cents a bushel, and now they were scurrying around trying to buy it on promises to pay one dollar a bushel for it.

As I took a final look at the lean, hump-shouldered, back-aching, coughing specimen of decadency, twenty-six years old, I thought how even he might have been saved at a cotton-mill, and turned into a fairly good citizen of some use to himself and country, if only he had been taken soon enough.

Egypt gave only a few definite results respecting those who had gone to the mills. It was with the greatest difficulty that schedules could be obtained for those who had gone and remained. So few of the people could read and write, there was no writing back home except in rare instances. The Baron himself was not at all interested in seeing the folks leave, if for no other reason he believed they could do better at home, if they would only work. A few families had been to the mills and returned, but they were so worthless and trifling, they would not stay anywhere, or the mills would not have them.

Egypt appeared somewhat as a seed-bed, however, sending out from the corrugated slopes of its steep mountain-sides numerous individuals and families, to settle elsewhere in the mountains and even beyond. The old woman who kept the disreputable cabin near the Tennessee line, where Bill Anders was shot, was from Egypt, and a Hensley. The Pates, of bloodthirsty infamy, were from Egypt too.

Down on the South Carolina line I ran across another family of Hensleys who had been burned up in their cabin after a spree. They were from Egypt.

"They are a curious lot," said a well-to-do farmer in another locality, in referring to them. "A family settled up on the mountain over there. They called the man Scaly Buck. I wanted someone to work, and I sent my man up to get him. Before my man got to his cabin, he forgot his name, and as the man's wife came out, he asked for Rusty Buck, which was the nearest he could get to Scaly."

"My! How that woman lit into my man! She cussed him for all he's worth, saying she warn't going' ter hev' nobody come aroun' callin' her man outer place. That his name was Scaly Buck an' not Rusty Buck."

CHAPTER XXVIII.

A JOURNEY IN SODOM.

THE tracing on my map showed the limits of Sodom Township on one side, as running along the apex of a mountain range three thousand five hundred feet above sea-level. Two spurs of this range descending to a river, one on the east, and the other on the west, mark its respective limits on the sides, while the river forms its ultimate boundary. The mountains hemming it in on three sides makes it like a great quadrangular amphitheater, of hills and dales, rugged and broken, facing the river.

While I had two very efficient agents in this township, it was one of the townships in particular to which I wished to give my personal inspection. In this instance it was necessary to leave my faithful filly behind and take a train. I left the train at a little yellow station fairly overhanging the river followed by the railroad on its winding way. A high bluff towered above the track opposite the station, and as the train moved on, the station agent, a loose-jointed, young mountain man, sauntered leisurely up.

"Where's the town?" I asked wonderingly.

A smile flitted across his face as he replied,

"There ain't none."

As I stepped out upon the railroad track to look at my surroundings, another loose-jointed fellow with two or three weeks' growth of red stubble around his mouth and chin greeted me.

"How d'y, stranger."

"What kind of a place is this anyway?" I asked.

"'Tain't none I reckon," and digging into his stubby beard, he turned his face with a grin inquiringly for the next question.

"Any place to stop round here?"

"Yer kin stop most anywhere, I reckon, if yer kin put up with the fare. Tha's a house up tha' on the bluff, wha' they'll take yer in if you've got ter stay, I reckon; nobody ever turns a feller away what's got ter stay 'round hyar."

Then inclining his head up the railroad track, he added,

"Tha's a store up tha' about half a mile, an' a barytes mill wha' they grind up the stuff to send off an' put inter flour, an' we git it back agin ter eat," and his grin grew broader, possibly at the thoughts of the barytes he got back to eat in his flour.

"Do you know where I can get a horse?"

"Hoss!" Wha' d'yer expect to go with a hoss?"

"I want to go to Sodom."

"'Tain't far ter Sodom. Stackhouse up ter the store 'as got the onlyest hoss 'round hyar. P'haps he'll let yer hev hissen."

My map showed a place of some kind on the bluff, marked in big letters, but climbing up there I found only three or four rough board deserted houses. Returning, I followed the glistening steel rails to the store indicated, marked also on my map with a big name. The barytes mill loomed up white with dust, a little below the store, with green clad hills filling in the background, for winter was over and the trees were bursting out in their glory of green.

As I entered the store two loungers on the porch followed me in with a shuffling gait, where they joined another idler or two lounging 'midst a confusion of boxes and barrels, and suspended horse-collars, buckets, blankets and chains. A partition at one end of the counter enclosed a post-office with the usual number of official announcements tacked on the outside. A rather handsome girl with a very white face, and wearing a steeple-crowned straw hat, stepped to the door, and pressing two fingers to her lips, shot through them with deadly accuracy a quantity of tobacco juice killing a bug on the post opposite.

The boss in the store informed me that he did not have any

horse, or at least he did not have one that was available, and so I consoled myself with the knowledge that the only proper way to obtain an intimate knowledge of the people in the mountains is to travel on foot. The dinner hour having passed, I disposed of some sardines and crackers and a bottle of soda-water. Then taking up a hitch in my belt, I set out for Sodom.

The road led between hills back of the store and descended a



HAVING THEIR PICTURES TAKEN

"She was proud of her boy, a husky youth of nineteen or twenty, big boned and broad shouldered."

creek. At a little cabin framed in a setting of trees, an interesting old woman cheerfully lined up her three children to have their pictures taken. She was proud of her boy, a husky youth of nineteen or twenty, big boned, and broad shouldered. She had lost her husband four years previously, and, finding it harder than ever getting a living, she had tramped with her little family away over into Kentucky, where her boy got work in the mines, and not only made enough for them to live on, but they succeeded in getting some good furniture, and a little

money ahead, when they decided to return to their own North Carolina home. They saw their furniture put on the train, but as none of them could read they thought that was all that was necessary, and they struck the trail. At last on their arrival at their home station, foot-worn and weary, they looked for their furniture, but it never came. They were destitute of everything, not having even a change of clothing. They hunted up the little cabin on the mountain-side, and picked berries all that season to get food and clothing, and then her boy got a job in the barytes mine. Now they were doing very well and the mother was happy in their prosperity.

Trudging on up the spur of the mountain, I overtook a youth carrying a suit-case behind a mule team. He said he was returning home from college, where he had studied Latin, algebra, and such things. He was carrying the suit-case because it contained a bottle of nitric acid, "the strongest acid in the world," he said, and he seemed to think that the jolting of the wagon would set it off like dynamite.

I asked him what he intended doing when he had finished his Latin and algebra at college.

"Dunno," he replied, "but I don't reckon I shall have ter work any more on the farm. Maybe I kin teach Latin; they say them professors gets lots of money teachin' Latin, an' it's not hard work like workin' on the farm."

"Don't you like the farm?" I asked.

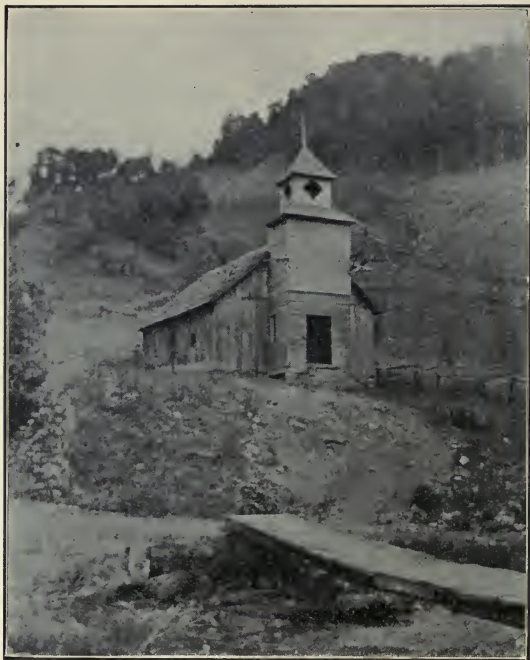
"I uster like it, but I don't like it no more since I have been off to college. The work is too hard."

Having reached the top of the spur and the road descending the other side of it, he climbed up on the wagon, holding his suit-case gingerly, notwithstanding I had assured him that his two-ounce bottle of nitric acid would not explode. By way of parting he called out,

"That's Lonesome Mountain off there. When yer git down below here, take ter yer left an' keep right on ter yer right an' up ter Low Gap, an' then down agin ter Sodom. Joe Leak keeps the post-office, an' he'll keep yer over night." And with

that the driver whipped up the mules, and the wagon went rattling down the road.

The road descending a piece, gave a majestic sweep around the side of the spur to the right, leaving a dense forest-clad dale to the left, from within which came the distant "chug,



THE PISEN FIELD DISTRICT-SCHOOL

The District registered ninety-eight children of school age,
but very few of them attended.

chug" of a steam sawmill. As I followed the sweep of the road, a landscape developed before me, disclosing one of those magnificent views that are rare even in the mountains. A narrow valley lay at my feet, above which to the right rose the towering height of the Sodom Mountain, its wooded summit bold against a pale blue sky flecked with gray clouds. Brown fields, almost perpendicular, and little gray cabins dotted its

sides which were scarred here and there with deep erosions, like red seams fringed with green woods. It seemed as though only the eagle in its flight could reach the little gray cabins, and yet they were habitations of men, women and children. That was Sodom, or at least a part of it.

At a small store by the roadside, a rather smart appearing boy of sixteen informed me that I was in Pizen Field, one of the school districts of Sodom, and that the barn-like structure with the queer steeple in the valley below was the district school-house. My report for the district showed that there were registered ninety-eight children of school age; that the school had a term of four months, and upon opening was fairly crowded, but towards its close its attendance dwindled down to a few scholars only.

Winding through the valley of Pizen Field, I ascended another spur coming down from the mother range. Nature seemed to have provided not only two of these spurs for marking the limits of the township, one on the east and one on the west, but others for dividing it into its three school districts, Pizen Field, Sodom and Rice's Creek.

The spur I ascended from Pizen Field was crossed at Low Gap whence a road ran directly along its apex to the summit of the range. Curiosity led me to follow this road a piece. A point of vantage suddenly opened another grand view before me, which I looked down upon, longing to have a picture of it, but neither my camera nor a painter's brush could do it justice.

As I stood viewing the scene, a small army of people came upon me like a band of Russian peasants armed for a fray with their long implements of agriculture. Their heavy tread, thumping the ground in unison, sounded like a troop of cavalry, particularly as upon seeing me they halted with a sudden precision that startled me. It was only a family, however, returning from the field where they had been planting their corn. The father and mother were a robust couple, and the children a husky lot, nearly all grown. I returned to their cabin with them, getting a picture of it in a little vale, the husky

girls hastily washing their faces for the occasion in the stream that flowed nearby.

Descending from Low Gap into the next valley, I asked a man hoeing in a field if I were in Sodom. He answered that I was, whereupon I asked why it was called Sodom.

"Dunno, stranger," he replied. "They give us a powerful mean name, but I don't know as the folks here are any meaner than in other places. Don't they have mean folks where you come from?"

I assured him that they had, and he went on with his hoeing. A bit farther on, a little ragged girl came trudging out of a cove with a bag of corn over her shoulder, which she allowed to fall to the ground as she shifted it frequently. Accosting her, I asked her name.

"Cindy," she answered with a peculiar intonation as though I should know that she was Cindy anyway.

"What's your papa's name?"

"Papsy, I reckon; that's what we call 'im," letting her corn slide off one shoulder, and then dragging it up to the other.

"Hasn't he got any other name?"

"Not as I knows on."

"How old are you?"

"Dunno, but I'm nine, I reckon," and with a half-scared expression she dragged her grist up to her shoulder again, and hurried on with it to the mill.

The valley was filled with the mellow light of evening when I arrived at Joe Leak's store. Joe, besides being a merchant, was postmaster, magistrate, and citizen-in-chief of Sodom. Not only was the township named Sodom, but the school district was Sodom, and Joe's post-office was Sodom until the missionaries came and had the name of the post-office officially changed.

Joe was very busy behind the counter in his store, waiting on two long-haired, tiny girls in flimsy gowns, bartering roots for snuff or tobacco. He moved one of his big hands across the counter for me to shake, and in reply to my inquiry, if he

could keep me for the night, he replied in a slow, cautious tone,

"We kin take kere of ye', I reckon, if ye' kin put up with our fare."

I assured him that what was good enough for him was good enough for me, and, that point being settled, he turned to his snuff and tobacco trade, as a short, ragged little old man sauntered up from the back of the store, where a red-headed youth was painfully writing at the end of the counter marked "Post Office."

The old man was wearing a boy's hat—a gray felt one, with a band that was once gay with color, and the hat was dudishly cocked on one side. He hitched up his trousers as they appeared in great danger of falling down; and as he spoke he disclosed two remaining canine teeth, while with the back of his hand he hastily wiped a fleck of tobacco juice from his gray beard.

"I allus like ter take up with strangers," he said. "They know more than we do in these parts. They hev' seen a heap more, an' hev' something to talk about. I was away from hyar onct, myself. I was in the Yankee army during the warr."

Then indicating the red-headed youth by throwing his hand over his shoulder, with his thumb pointing in his direction, he continued,

"He was in the army, too, in the Philippines; some of us get out sometimes. I've been thinkin' of goin' ter Florida."

As I sat down on the store bench, he took another hitch at the danger-line of his trousers, and sat down by my side, saying that while he lived in Sodom, he was not a Sodomite, because he came from Egypt, in Yancey County.

"Thar war seven brother of us, all borned in Egypt," said he, "but I never went back ter Egypt ter stay after the warr."

I told him that I was well acquainted in Egypt, having already carried on my investigations there, whereupon he asked whether I knew Doc Pate. I remembered him, a round body,

on little spindle-legs, like a brownie, with a flowing white beard, a kindly, good-natured man.

"He's my brother," said the man, "but I hev'n't seen 'im these many years."

I asked him whether he knew Lifus Pate, who killed Bill Anders.

"I heer'd 'bout the killin'," said he. "Lifus is the illegitimate son of Doc, by a Shelton woman, an' he married one of Doc's daughters.¹ Them Shelton's got bad blood in 'em."

"There was another Pate who killed a woman," said I.

"Yes, that was one of Doc's sons. John Pate killed his concubine Johana. She was a bad one too. John got away an' lived in a cave. His wife carred some'in' ter him ter eat, until the Sheriff followed her an' took him. He's servin' time now."

"And there was another Pate," said I, "who chased a small boy around a tree and shot him dead."

"That was another one of my brother's sons. Them an' the Shelton women are all mixed up. That Shelton blood I tell ye' is bad."

The subject was changed, and I got the old fellow to tell about himself. He said he never had been to school a day in his life, but he could read, having learned in the army. He could write enough to sign his name to his pension vouchers, but any other necessary writing he had to get someone to do for him. He owned a corn-mill down the creek, and the mill, he said, had brought him in two hundred bushel of corn in tolls, the past year.

As we were talking two ladies came into the store, who I at once guessed were the mission workers in that district.

"Them's the teachers," whispered the old man, nudging me.

After they had finished their business, I followed them outside and questioned them respecting their educational work.

"It's up to these people now," said the eldest of the two,

¹ According to this, Lifus married his half sister.

"to decide whether we continue the work here or not. We have done about all we can do for them."

"Do you get any results with your school?" I asked.

"Get any results!" she almost shrieked. "Here Natalie," calling to a bright faced little girl, "this man wants to know if you learn anything in our school. Tell him, yourself."

"Oh, yes, sir," said she, "I learn a whole lot." And without hesitation she proceeded to tell me some of the things she had learned.

She was Joe Leak's daughter.

"And how many have you got in your school like this one," I asked.

"They won't come," said the teacher. "They remind me of the people out in New Mexico where I taught before. They do not seem to take any interest in our school, and this is our last term, unless they decide definitely that they want us to keep it up. It is up to them now to decide."

Joe finished his trading for the day by dismissing, with a box of snuff, a wee mite of girl who had come down the trail, dragging a bag of roots almost as big as herself. He came out on the platform in front of the store, and looking around, locked up for the night. The old fellow who had taken such a fancy to me gave his breeches a hitch again, and inviting me down the creek to see him, trudged off.

Joe took me up to his house on a knoll above the store. We seated ourselves on the porch, and then the mental strain which he had evidently been under in his store, while swapping his snuff and tobacco for roots, was thrown off. Scarcely had we seated ourselves, however, when one of my agents turned up accompanied by a huge, broad-shouldered man, whom he presented as the Rev. Pink Sellers, a preacher, who would have been elected superintendent of the Sunday School a Sunday or two previous, had he not been obliged to stay away from the meeting because he had no shoes. Since then he not only had gotten himself a pair of shoes, but he was resplendent in a new black suit.



THE REV. PINK SELLERS

A mountain preacher who didn't understand why he could not have two wives if Solomon had four hundred, and as Scripture says our Lord turned water into wine, he thought he had an equal right to turn corn into whisky.

"He would carry the election now, sure!" said my assistant, as the huge form in black disappeared down the road.

Joe's mental strain having given way to loquacity, he told how he had arrested the Rev. Pink Sellers upon his being indicted for bigamy, giggling like an overgrown school-boy as he told the tale.

"I hed the warrant fer 'im," said he, "an' I seed as he was a preachin' away as hard as he could preach, but I couldn't wait. I jes' hed ter tell 'im I'd been sent ter take 'im with the warrant, an' he said,

"'I'll go 'long, suh. I ain't gifted ter makin' no trouble agin' the law,' an' then he gave 'is congregation a hymn ter sing, an' singin' hisself, he marched with me outer the church-house, an' down the road singin' as hard as he could sing.

"When I turned 'im over ter the jailer, the jailer when he seed 'im, says he,

"'Why, Mister Sellers, I thought yer war a preacher!'

"'So I am,' says Mr. Sellers.

"'But I seed as yer hev two wives.'

"'An' ef Solomon hed four hundred, couldn't I hev two?'

says he."

"'Not ef the law says yer can't,' says the jailer.

And the Rev. Pink Sellers being duly tried and convicted of having two wives, got six months on the chaingang.

On another occasion, encountered in the road with a jug of illicit whiskey, and being accused of blockading, he set the jug down carefully, and then drawing himself up to his full height he said,

"Scripture says our Lord turned water into wine at the weddin' feast. It may be we ain't got no weddin' feast, but 'pears ter me that if one of us poah mortals has got more corn then he kin eat, thar' should be no conviction of 'im fer turnin' et into some'in' he kin drink, fer man must hev drink, as well as bread and meat."

Joe belonged to the class known as "good livers." It is noticeable that the "good livers" always have something, but

whether the something produces the "good livers," or the "good livers" produce something, is another question. I am strongly inclined to believe the latter.

And Joe proved a royal host. While his wife served the things from the kitchen, he shoved them towards us on the table, insisting upon our having more and more. With his head bent over his plate he set the example of eating. Looking up frequently, shaking his coarse black hair out of the way, it having a perverse way of falling over his eyes, he would tell us something in his facetious way, interspersing it with his boyish giggles. He usually began his sentences with "I seed," or at least "I seed" figured in them so frequently that with him it was an impressive expression not to be forgotten.

The next morning after breakfast, he remarked,

"Seed it's bein' Sunday, I 'low et would be all right ter go up ter Low Gap ter Sunday School. I don't 'spect tha'll be any preachin', 'cause et takes powerful lot o' rootin' ter pay a preacher ter come hyar mor'an once a month, an' then he don't git paid. Ole man Pate what ye' war talkin' ter in the store las' night, is a parson, but some kick about 'is preachin' 'cause he swears. They seem ter think ef they git a feller from somewhere else, no matter what he does roun' home, long as he don't do it round hyar, he's all right ter preach hyar."

Joe thus enlightening us on things in general, my assistant and I trudged along with him up the mountain to the "church-house" at Low Gap. As we neared it we could hear someone within shouting loudly.

"That's Parson Pate," said Joe, "an' by the way ye' hear 'im, yer'd think he could do some preachin' too."

As I entered the church and looked around, I was surprised at the general appearance of the gathering there. The young people in particular were cleanly, though cheaply clad. There were bright, healthy faces, and I observed as they took their lessons, many more could read than I was led to expect. The Rev. Pink Sellers was there on one of the benches at right

angles to the pulpit, radiant in his black suit and big brogans. He didn't read for the reason that he couldn't.

After the Sunday's lessons were over, there was singing conducted by the red-headed ex-soldier of the Philippines, who, by the way, was Joe's son. He would read the first lines of the hymn, and then all would sing them. Then he would read two more lines, and they would sing them. The singing was not bad. I have heard worse in some of the little country churches in New England, where they had music to accompany it. The Puritans never did sing, unless they wanted to make someone believe they were going to die.

Speaking followed the singing, and I was called upon to say something. Somewhat embarrassed at the unexpected call, in khaki riding breeches and flannel shirt, I rose to the occasion, telling the gathering how favorably I was impressed with their appearance; how I enjoyed being with them among those green-clad hills and mountains; how interested I was in all they did and said, and glad to note the progress they were making for better things.

Thereupon Parson Pate rose, and throwing out his chest and waving his arms, he made an eloquent speech. He said his heart filled with gladness to hear the stranger from the great capital of our country, tell the children and young people of Shady Grove Sunday School how favorably they impressed him. They all knew that they were poor; that they did not have much of the world's good things; that they never saw anything of the world beyond their mountain homes, and all that they knew of it was what circulated by word of mouth from the occasional traveler. But when the stranger who had seen so much, and who had come from so far, told them that they were looking and doing so well, they too ought to feel gladness in their hearts. He only wished that they could send a delegate to the great Sunday School convention that he heard was to held in Washington, with delegates from all over the world and let them know that Shady Grove Sunday School, in the mountains of Sodom, was a Sunday School to be proud of.

"An' this other feller," said he finally, waving his hand and inclining his head towards my assistant who had preceded me with a talk, "made me feel glad too. He's been round some too, an' he knows some'in'. So yer all ought ter feel glad ter hear yerselfs talked so well about."

The Rev. Pink Sellers then arose, clothed in the majesty of his black suit and new brogans. Quoting Scripture by the yard, he exhorted his hearers, but just to what purpose it was hard for me to make out further than to demonstrate his ability to quote Scripture. The exercises were closed with more singing, and we filed out into the bright sunlight, where the Rev. Pink Sellers disappeared in the bushes in one direction, Parson Pate down the road in another, and boys and girls scattered in other directions, some of the girls running like deer.

As I walked along with Joe to his home, I drew him out on matters I wanted his opinion. Untutored and uneducated as he was, he was not only witty, as a story-teller and a host, but he was able to discuss local problems in a serious vein as he saw them, and with rare intelligence. He did not think either the free schools or the mission schools met the requirements of the people. Few, if any, cared whether their children learned to read and write, because they saw no practical advantage in it. Their struggle for mere bread was too great. The Sunday School gathering that had impressed me so favorably was representative of their best element. There were many of the people in the district who never saw the inside of the church or Sunday School, if for no other reason than they did not have presentable clothing. On the other hand, there was scarcely anyone who could shoe a horse properly, make or mend a wagon, build a house, or do anything of a practical nature, yet the mission school had been carrying on its work there twelve or fourteen years. The teachers and religious workers came into the mountains with the avowed purpose of helping them, but they were always impracticable, he said. They would express surprise because the poor cove-

dweller did not have a window in his cabin, when it was so full of holes "he could throw a cat through it anywhere, and didn't need no window." They complained because the poor women and girls would not knit stockings when they had nothing to spin and knit with, and the wool was worth more than the stockings could be bought for. Having the wool, it would take a week to spin the yarn, and knit one pair of



A YOUNG MOTHER DRYING ROOTS

stockings, while enough roots could be dug in that time to buy two pairs of stockings.

While the church and school-house maintained by the Board of Home Missions was within a short distance of Joe's house, and his little Natalie was getting all the advantages of their education, I observed that he made no move to attend their services, which were in the afternoon. I left him towards evening as he opened a can of peaches in his store for a gawky-looking fellow in a new suit of store clothes, and who swallowed the peaches as they were.

After trudging over hills and dales by narrow paths, down

ravines and up again, I passed the night with the young clergyman who had charge of the work in Sodom District and a number of other districts around. He was very honest and frank in his views, admitting without reservation that the mission work, after upwards of fourteen years' trial, was a failure.

"When we first came here," said he, "it appeared to be a great success. The few well-to-do, or fairly prosperous land-owners in the country around, received us with enthusiasm and helped our work along. They didn't like our religion much, believing that we were Catholics, and then the religion was not emotional enough for them, but our schools furnished an economical means for the education of their children which they were glad to take advantage of. Now that the children have grown up, and those who have any education at all won't stay home, they have turned against us. There is so-and-so, who owns all the land around here, and who gave us the land for our church, school, teacher's cottage and manse. He is not friendly to us now, although there is no open hostility against us. After his younger boys went through our school he sent them off to Maryville College where they got to playing football and one thing or another, and when they came home, he said, they were no account. He lays the blame on to us.

"Now such families have practically broken up our schools by keeping the children away from them. In this district they have set up a Baptist seminary, and, as they are nearly all Baptists, who have any religion at all, there is nothing left for us to do but sell out. You can buy this plant cheap if you want it."

I told him that the best thing I could suggest was to turn the plant into a cotton-mill, and teach the children spinning, and he agreed that I was about right.

After spending a week in tramping up creeks and over mountain heights, stopping in cabins with the very poor who freely gave me of their corn-bread and fat pork, their only food, I returned to Sodom. I was directed down a rock-bound

gorge to the slate-blue river winding around the foot of green-clad hills that marked one of its boundaries. Crossing a huge foot-log, I was once more in Sodom, and ascending a narrow ravine I heard the low grinding noise of a corn mill. Presently through trees I saw the mill, and there was Parson Pate, just as I had seen him first at the post-office—old gray hat, long hair and whiskers, striped shirt, ragged vest and bursting trousers. He was glad to see me, of course, and told



PARSON PATE AND LILY STARTING FOR HOME ON HER GRAY NAG

me to wait till he had finished grinding Lily's corn, and then we would go to church, for it was the Sabbath.

The meal being ground he helped Lily mount her gray nag. He adjusted the bag of meal for her on the back of her saddle, and as the old gray nag started off he said to me, "come along."

He took me to his house, a little board structure of two rooms, surrounded by other board houses and cabins, almost as thick as they could be. In a bed in one of the rooms of his house lay his invalid wife, a kindly-faced, gray-haired old

woman who had been in a helpless state for many years. I talked with her while the Parson made a vain effort to find more suitable clothing to wear to church. Finally slipping on an old coat, which I told him encouragingly was all right, he retied his shoes, which he had untied with the thoughts of finding a better pair, and looking around as if to make sure that he had not forgotten something, he said, "come along."

I was glad to get out of the room in which the old lady was confined, into the fresh and sweet atmosphere outside. Our way led between hills and through dales, with cabins or board houses and shacks in almost every available spot. Women and children—young, old and middle-aged, were working in the fields, mostly on steep mountain-sides where a goat could scarcely climb. Occasionally the Parson hailed some one of them with an invitation to come along to church. One tall, cadaverous-looking woman, thumping vigorously with her hoe at an obstinate root, replied snappishly:

"I reckon I've got 'nuff ter do without goin' ter no church."

By a process of winding between hills, the trail eventually took us up to Low Gap. As we paused to wipe the sweat from our brows, I asked the Parson why they had changed the name of the post-office from Sodom to Reviere.

"The Presbyterians did that," he replied. "They didn't think Sodom high-toned enough, so they hed the name changed."

"They are good people, are they not?" I asked.

"Yaas," came the reply slowly, "they are good folks enough, and they are powerfully well educated, but they don't know nuthin'." And from his view-point they did not.

Arriving at the church we entered. The preacher was there, a tall man with blue eyes, and reddish hair and moustache. He stood on the platform, with a pine post in front of him for a pulpit. On the top of the post was an open Bible from which he read his text:

"And round about the throne were four and twenty seats: and upon the seats I saw four and twenty elders sitting,

clothed in white raiment; and they had on their heads crowns of gold."

Then, surveying the elders seated on the benches to the left of him, and then those to the right of him, he let his gaze wander over the congregation in front, and then back to the benches on the right. His gaze seemed to linger on the Rev. Mr. Pink Sellers, who bobbed his head up and down approvingly. Then the minister, clenching his fist and raising it on high, yelled at the top of his voice, "Clothed in white raiment, with crowns of gold on their heads," and spinning around he shook his fist at the elders on the other side. They looked up at him meekly as if they fully realized the fact that they were not clothed in white raiment and did not wear crowns of gold upon their heads.

For fully an hour the man ranted and stormed. He strode back and forth on the platform, jumped up and down, yelled and wept. It is no exaggeration to say that there were not ten lines in all this ranting that I could clearly understand, and, of the little I did understand, I could not discover the slightest connection between it and his text.

When he had finished, it developed that this was his last sermon for the year he had been engaged, and it was next in order to elect his successor. As the election was proceeding, a man with jet black whiskers, a very white face and a bag of store cookies, got up in the congregation, and with a humorous twinkle in his black eyes, indicated the preacher, as he said,

"Before gittin' shed of this feller, an' 'lectin' another one, it 'pears ter me we'd better pay this one what we 'greed on when he come hyar. He's preached a whole year now, an' we ain't give 'im a cent."

As the elders seemed to ignore this suggestion, he rose a second time, and, insisting upon his proposition, said that he would start a subscription with one dollar for "paying this feller off." Looking over at Parson Pate, with the humorous twinkle he intimated that he would like to see him come across with a like amount. The Parson, rising, fumbled in his purse,

bringing out two dimes, and then turning the purse upside down he thumped it in his open palm, showing that the two dimes were all he had. He walked up to the pine post and placed the dimes on the open Bible. Persistent effort brought the total amount collected up to two dollars and forty cents, which the preacher finally scraped off the Bible with a grin, as though he were fortunate in getting that much.

An attempt was then made to get up a subscription promising to pay his successor for the ensuing year, the sum of twelve dollars. This proposition was agreed to until Parson Pate, in a vigorous speech, proposed that anyone who failed to pay the amount subscribed, should be hauled up before the church and tried for "covetousness."

Voices rose in protest at this. The man with the black whiskers said he would subscribe twenty-five cents and he would pay it when necessary, but some "other feller might be hard up when the time came to pay, and he didn't think he should be punished for what he could not help. A woman rising begged that the rules prohibiting her sex having a voice in church matters be suspended, in order that she might express her views. The privilege evidently being granted, she said she thought him "a pretty no account man who could not pay the preacher twenty-five cents a year." This put a quietus on the discussion, and the meeting was adjourned until the afternoon to take up the unfinished business.

Leaving the man with the white face and black whiskers leaning up against the church-house eating his store cookies, the Rev. Sellers accompanied me down the road a piece, and then put me on a trail skirting Sodom Mountain high up overlooking the valley of Pisen Field. There were cabins above me and cabins below me, and some of them glistening provokingly in the blazing sun, without a tree or a shrub near them. As I saw their little ragged children scamper at the sight of me, I could readily understand where the ninety-eight children registered at the Pisen Field school came from. But how their lives were maintained upon those exhausted mountain-sides, was another question.

CHAPTER XXIX.

THE DARK CORNER.

RUBBERNECK having had a good rest, with a cropping here and there of green clover added to her usual diet of corn and dry cornstalks, was in fine mettle. She carried me over miles of mountain road, bumping me against fences, and scraping me along strands of barbed wire in her frantic attempts to avoid the mud that had not dried up in places, until the covering of my lower extremities, except the parts protected by a pair of stout cavalry leggins, was ripped into shreds, and I was obliged to appear in the streets of Asheville like a veteran just returning from a hard fought campaign. She, however, after a forty-mile jaunt with me on her back, struck the hard pavement of the city streets seemingly as fresh as when we started on our journey, and as she sighted her first trolley car, her antics reminded me of those of the mountaineer reported by one of our agents at a cotton-mill, who upon first seeing the mill, was lassoed to keep him from running away.

I tarried in Asheville long enough to buy a new pair of trousers. A further ride of twenty-one miles over an excellent road brought me to Hendersonville, where I found my secretary, whom I had sent on from my last headquarters, part way by wagon and part way by rail, only just arriving. Due to the kindness of the principal of the public school, with whom I had corresponded, no time was lost in looking for a place to stay, for he had recommended me to an admirable lady who kept an excellent hostelry, and for the first time in weeks, I found myself quartered midst surroundings and people who are of no particular interest beyond the mere mention

of the fact that they belonged to the class that we are familiar with in our usual walks of life, and who are rich enough to idle at least a part of their time away at winter or summer resorts.

My surroundings were almost luxurious enough to tempt me into a desire to give up work myself, but I had selected the place from which to direct further operations because of its being a central point in a section of country presenting widely varying conditions, differing very much from those to which I had already given my attention. In the first place it was maintained that no such startling conditions of poverty and distress existed in that part of the country as found elsewhere; and in the second place, it was said, entire localities had been greatly depopulated by the cotton-mills drawing the poor people from them.

Notwithstanding the high state of culture and advancement presented by the city itself, it is on the borders of a region which from time immemorial is said to have furnished a home for the lawless mountaineer, moonshiner and bushwhacker. Pleasantly situated on a plateau, it is bordered on the east and on the south by the Blue Ridge Mountains that swing around it, forming the northern boundary of South Carolina, whence the mountains extend into Georgia and Alabama.

To the east of the city, overlooking Polk County, is a point on the crest of the mountain range called the Edge of the World. Below it is an imaginary line which is pointed out to the gullible tourist as the "dead line," it being alleged that the lawless moonshiner permits no one unknown to him to descend beyond that line into what he considers his rightful domain.

Farther around to the west where the range borders South Carolina, a particularly infamous section of the country is known as the Dark Corner. Two great mountain spurs, known respectively as the Hogsback and the Hogshhead, shut this corner in on the north and east, while on the south its cove-like plateau is bordered with hills and rocks. On the west the irregular folds of the Glassy Mountains, a part of the Blue Ridge, roll downward, partially shutting it in on that side, so

that nature has made this little corner a part of the world almost unto itself, and dark are the deeds, and many, related of it. Out of it have sallied forth, in times past, the outlaw and feudist, boldly attacking officers of the law, fighting pitched battles with them in some instances, and releasing their prisoners in others. On one occasion, some of them held up a train at Landrum, went through it, found an officer for whom they were looking, took him out and shot him dead.

Equally bloody and cruel are the deeds recorded against them as taking place within their own precincts, among themselves. The tales I have heard recounted by officers of the law, concerning some of their fights with these people, sound more like tales of fiction from some sixteenth century romance than facts of modern times. Others have told me tales of wanton murders committed by them, instigated purely from a spirit of drunken treachery or mischief.

An attempt to visit this particular "dark corner" was frustrated on my first investigation by a serious fall, causing an attack of pleurisy. Now I determined to visit it regardless of warnings and statements made to the effect that I could not do so with safety. In truth, I put about as much reliance upon the warnings as I did upon the yarns about the "dead line" below the "Edge of the World."

The story of the "dead line," however, seeming to me to be worthy of exploitation, I set out, with the assistance of a mountaineer farmer's son, to work out the district with the schedules. Together we proceeded to the crest of the mountain range, where seated upon our horses we viewed the grand panorama spread below us. We then plunged boldly down by the precipitous, winding road to the country below.

As we descended the mountain we found ourselves entering a hot, dry country. The first cabin we came to was perched upon a small, sun-baked plateau, but nobody was at home. At the next one, an old man was working at a curiously-contrived lathe, at which he was making splint-bottomed chairs. He had a large family, and his reception of us was anything but un-

friendly. He answered our questions and supplied us with the data for our schedule without hesitation. He informed us where we could find the District Committee who kept the school records and who could supply us with a census of the families having children of school age.

Proceeding to a small frame house as directed a man with the most extraordinary eyebrows I have ever seen, opened the door and looked out. His eyebrows were as big as the moustaches of the late Italian King, only they came down over his eyes instead of going up.

He taciturnly invited us into the house, where with the assistance of a neighbor or two, he was putting the finishing touches on a pine coffin covered with cheap, black calico. The coffin soon finished, and carried away by the neighbors, he brought out the school register, and with the assistance of his wife, we were soon able to compile a complete census of all the families in the district. We ascertained that the bad name of the locality was due to a group of families named Spicer, living in an isolated cove under the mountain range, whose children, all illegitimate, never went to school, or Sunday School, or scarcely anywhere else.

With my assistant I spent most of the afternoon in trying to find the way into this cove, which was said to have only one entrance, and after riding all around it, we found ourselves towards evening high up on the mountain-side, approaching a large white house that seemed very much out of place under high precipices, with steep hill-sides below.

The owner proved to be an amiable old fellow who used the expression in addressing us, "you uns," the first time I had observed its use in my mountain travels. He explained that he had about killed himself with work among the mountain ledges and rocks, trying to make something, and now he had completed his new house with the expectation of getting some summer boarders, and not having to work so hard. He put us up for the night and was very kind and attentive to our wants.

As badly as I wanted to make a personal inspection of Spicer's Cove, I felt obliged to leave further prosecution of the work to my assistant, whom I left the next morning looking very gloomy and downcast at the prospects before him. But he proved himself able and competent, working out the entire district and turning in a most interesting and complete report of the conditions found. Upon his entering Spicer's Cove, the men took to the woods where they evidently tried to scare him away by shooting off their guns. They not only failed to scare him, but he interviewed their women, and went back a second time to verify and complete some of the data secured on the schedules from them. Both the mothers and their children could not articulate their words clearly, and it was with the greatest difficulty they could make themselves understood to strangers. When talking among themselves, although their language seemed unintelligible, they understood each other without difficulty.

In setting out for the Dark Corner, I answered the warnings of my friends who said I would never return, by telling them that I would not only return, but I would bring back some moonshine, which seemed to be the foundation of the Dark Corner's evil repute. In order that I could keep my promise, the proprietor of the livery-stable handed me two pint flasks, one of which was filled with yellow kernels of corn. He explained the presence of the corn, in that whiskey being very scarce since prohibition had gone into effect, someone had offered to fetch "a pint of good old corn" for fifty cents, and after getting the fifty cents, he had sent back the flask filled with the corn. It was not the kind of corn anticipated.

Putting the flasks in my saddle-bags, I left by the old State road across the plateau and up over the Blue Ridge down into South Carolina. This was the road of former times, when it was the great artery of travel from the West, the Kentucky and Tennessee traders driving their hogs and cattle over it, to the cotton markets as far south as Augusta, Georgia, and the

mountaineer farmers wagoned their produce over it to feed them.

As soon as I had crossed the summit of the Blue Ridge, a sterile strip of mountainous country presented itself below me. I soon came to a cabin with a weather-beaten door closing its entrance, and green grass grown up all around it. It was abandoned. I looked down upon another one, out of the chimney of which no smoke was coming, and it too proved to be abandoned.



GONE! GONE TO THE COTTON-MILL

It is from such productive farms that the special interests claim that our splendid mountain people go to the mills to be ruined.

Farther on down the mountain, resting upon a terraced hillside, separated from the road by a ravine, was a little wood-colored house. A line of clothes flapped in the wind, and a row of blossoming trees added cheer to the scene. As I photographed it, two women came trudging up the other side of the hill, followed by a small dog. The dog, upon seeing me, came running down the hill barking spitefully, but retreated as I crossed over and went up to the house, one of the women adding to his discomfiture by throwing sticks and stones at him.

As I asked the women what had become of the families that lived in the cabins I had passed, they replied that they had gone to the cotton-mills. The father of the family living in the last cabin had died about two years ago, after which the mother had taken the children and gone.

"Wasn't he the man who sold the whiskey?" I asked.

"Waal, I reckon," came the reply. "I 'low they all sold et when they got the chanct."

"Do they do any better at the mills, than they did here?" was my next question.

"Ef they didn't do any better, I 'low they wouldn't stay. We don't see none comin' back," said the older woman.

Returning across the ravine, I rode on, still on down the mighty mountain. My next halt was before a rambling structure of two stories with a neat fence inclosing a yard of shrubbery before a long porch. An upright stone slab like a tomb-stone, marked a spring of running water near the road, with the legend "Poinsette Springs."

The colorless face of a dark-haired young woman on the porch, appearing above the shrubbery, answered my salutations in a shrill voice. She looked as though she was drying up and slowly dying of lonesomeness and inactivity. She said the house belonged to her father; that in former days it had been a stopping place for the herders with their droves of hogs and horses and mules, but it was no longer as it used to be.

As I asked her the way to the Dark Corner she laughed drily.

"You don't mean ter go inter the Dark Corner do you?" she said. "Strangers didn't used to go in there at all. But I reckon it ain't nothing like it used to be neither. I ain't heard of no cuttings up from there for a long time. Things have changed mightily all around, I 'spect."

Farther on down another range of mountain, I came upon a large open field. The barren aspect of the country had changed now, and in the field were two men ploughing with slick, fat mules. As my road swung around the edge of the

field I saw a man in the road apparently watching the men plough. A jug and a tin cup under the bushes near him looked suspicious, but the jug contained nothing stronger than water.

As I spoke to the man he held one hand to his ear to catch the sound, and I found I had to shout at the top of my voice to make myself heard. But he was unusually talkative. He looked at my government card with interest, and seemed most anxious to inform me on conditions without waiting for me to shout my questions at him. He said that formerly he was one of the biggest whiskey makers in the country, but he had given it up satisfied that it was for his country's good. He told how conditions had changed from bad to good; how the country had made great strides in every way, and there were no longer the idle, good for nothing, besotted parents and hungry children lying around in their cabins as formerly.

When I told him that I was going to the Dark Corner, he said,

"Be keerful that they don't ambush you. But I reckon there ain't so much danger now. It isn't as bad as it used to be. I used to haul grain in there for their whiskey, but when they killed the officer down at Landrum, I said to 'em, 'boys, I'm done now; you had the sympathy of all the folks before, but you've got 'em agin you now.'"

I should like to have stopped over night with the talkative old fellow, but it was a difficult task to make myself heard. I rode on past his big farm-house, on the mail-box of which was the name "Hightower." I passed other big farm-houses and finally stopped at one owned by Arthur Hodges. He put up my horse, invited me in, and we shortly had supper, his family consisting of his wife and daughter. He was full of information, and what he told me about the cabin dwellers and the cotton-mill that began taking them away, would make a chapter by itself.

Among the things of interest he told me was the recent repeal of the lien law by the State Legislature, which he

thought a very good thing for the poor tenants on the plantations. I observed that he did not use the word farm. Under the old law the country merchants were enabled to take a mortgage on the tenant's crop before he had planted anything. The merchant would then try to unload on the tenant such articles and supplies as brought him the most money. Very often the tenant, unable to read or write, kept no account of what he got, and by the time he had harvested his crop, he would find that what the landlord did not take for his rent the merchant would take by virtue of his mortgage.

While Mr. Hodges displayed an excellent memory on everything else, when reference was made to the Dark Corner, his memory seemed signally to fail him. He said he had not been in the Dark Corner for thirty years. As for making whiskey, he and his family had been opposed to it, and his father, now eighty years old, had refused to sell his grain for the purpose of making it. With respect to the cotton-mills, his summing up was in a very few words,

"No one seems to know the amount of good they have done for the country. It is wonderful."

The following morning he directed me to the Dark Corner over a stone bridge, an arch of which had fallen in and was replaced with a wooden structure. The road led east at the foot of the crumpled mountain range that loomed up on my left. I rode on in a slight drizzling rain, and I had not gone far when I came to a man ploughing. A seventeen-year-old boy was sitting in the dirt talking to him. The boy was about the color of a Chinese laundry ticket, and looked as though he might have tens of millions of Dr. Stiles' hook-worms. I asked the man if the boy was sick. He replied that he was not, "but" he added "he's not stout."

The man's cabin was perched on the side of a hill, and there were several sickly-looking children around it. At the next one a man came out directing me on my way. He looked sick too. The next house was a white-washed one that looked very pretty with its vine-trailed porch and blossoming apple-trees

in front. A young woman hurrying out on to the porch, said the esquire, her father, lived there, and he had gone crazy. As she hurried into the house I rode on.

At the next house an old woman answering my inquiry to the Dark Corner, said that if I kept right on going, I would get there.

"Why do they call it the Dark Corner?" I asked.

"'Cause they've so much devilment in thar', I reckon."

"Do they make moonshine?" was my next question.

"Not so much, now," she said.

"What did they stop making it for?"

"'Cause they got so devilish mean, I reckon; an' the more they made, the poorer they got. They got so devilish poor, a heap of 'em hed to go ter the cotton-mills."

I passed several houses on the ramshackle order and occasionally I saw a man in the distance, ploughing. Passing over a red hill and down a piece I came to a picturesque, white-washed board house close to the road. An old man was coming along in front of it. He looked as though he had had measles, and hadn't gotten over it, and still had a stomach-ache. With one hand pressing on his stomach, he cocked up one ear with the other hand raised to it. Before he could answer me, another man came shuffling out of the house and into the road demanding to know to whom I was talking. I replied that I was talking to anyone who would talk to me. As he raised his little old be-whiskered face peering at me, I asked him what ailed him. He replied that he had heart disease, but there was another fellow in the house who was worse than he was, for he might die any minute.

"But what do you want anyhow?" he demanded.

"Is this the Dark Corner?" I asked.

"Sartin et is, Stranger; but what do you want in here anyhow?" he again demanded.

"Oh, I just came in here to see how you folks were getting on, and how they lie about you," I replied. "They told me I couldn't come in here and get out alive," and reaching out

to him a plug of tobacco, which I had provided for such an occasion, I added, "Have a chew."

By this time he had gotten to my horse's head as though to catch hold of the bridle, but as I reached over with the tobacco his face broke out into a broad grin, and his voice changing to an amiable one, he said,

"Say, Stranger; they do lie about us powerful. I went down ter Greenville onect an' they put me in jail for a week. Now we won't treat you thet way, Stranger. I only tuk a dram of their stuff, an' et went right ter my head. I didn't know nuthin' till I found myself in jail.

"Onect I hear'd 'em talkin' 'bout us Dark Corner folks, saying all kinds o' mean things 'bout us, an' I let 'em talk a spell an' when I thought they had talked 'bout us long 'nuff, I said ter 'em, 'I be from the Dark Corner, boys,' an' they shet up ther' heads tight; not a word out of 'em. They knew 'nuff ter 'tend ter ther' own business arter thet.

"I tell you, Stranger, we'll treat yer all right in hyar. Safest place in the whole worl' ter come ter."

Turning the plug of tobacco around a time or two, as though undecided which of its corners to bite off first, he finally bit off one of them, and handed the plug back to me. As I told him he might keep it, he exclaimed,

"What, do yer buy 'bacca ter give 'way?"

"I happen to have a couple of plugs," said I, allaying his rising suspicion, "and I know you don't always get it in here so very easy."

"'Deed, Stranger; we don't. But as I was sayin' they lie 'bout us powerful. One time a feller come in hyar, an' I know'd he was skeered ter death 'cause he war a spy; but he didn't think I know'd it. He come in hyar ter find out what he could 'bout the burnin' up of the old Hart place, an' the Hensleys. He staid 'round hyar fer a week, mousin' 'round, but he never found out nuthin'. An' when he left, he said we war the quietest, peaceablest folks he ever seed.

"You never hear'd 'bout the burnin' up of them Hensley?"

They came hyar from North Caroliny. Egypt! Yaas, thet's et! Thet's whar they come from. They took the Hart place up thar on the mountain. You could see et from hyar before et burned up. They war powerful good wourkers too, an' I let 'em hev ther' seed-corn thet spring, but they all got burned ap.

"How did et happen? Waal, I hev my own idee 'bout et. You see et war a Saturday night, an' some fellers went up thar ter hev a good time. They took some whiskey 'long, an' I 'spect they got inter a racket. My own idee is, the Hensley boy tried ter stan' up fer 'is sister, an' they got inter a fight, an' thar war some shootin' an' the Hensleys gittin' the worse of et, thar was nuthin' ter do but pot fire to the cabin an' burn 'em up. Thet's my idee, but the 'Squire, who sot on the inquest, said it war all right; thet et war an accident. But I hev my own idee 'bout thet."

The relation of this incident was followed by that of another concerning an itinerant photographer, who getting into a wordy quarrel with the man with whom he lodged, was badly cut up.

"Yer see," said the old fellow in conclusion, "he didn't know 'nuff ter 'tend ter his own business an' shet up when he oughter. He got inter an' argumint with the man an' he didn't offer ter pay 'im what he owed, but he cussed 'im. That picter man got well all right, but he never will look like no man no moah.

"Yer'll find the Dark Corner folks all right Stranger; treat yer better than yer war ever treated in yer life," was the old fellow's final comment, as I raised my reins to go.

I left him leaning up against the garden fence as I got a last glimpse of the other old fellow on the opposite side of the road, with one hand still on his stomach and the other up to his ear. As I rode on I began to wonder if all Dark Corner folks were infirm, deaf or crazy. The man in the house, worse off than the one I had been talking to, might have died for all I knew.

Presently I came to a new white building which I took to be a church. Beyond it, spread out through the trees, was a burying-ground, the largest I had seen in all my mountain travels. The Dark Corner folks evidently were particular about burying their dead, and putting up head-stones to their graves. I thought the scene worthy a picture and as I photographed it, I wondered how many lay there who had died with their boots on.

As I was putting up my camera, another little old man came along. He was driving a big mule hitched to a small plough. I asked him if the white building was the church I heard tell about, where the congregation attending worship stacked their guns in their seats. He looked up at the edifice, and after a brief pause, answered,

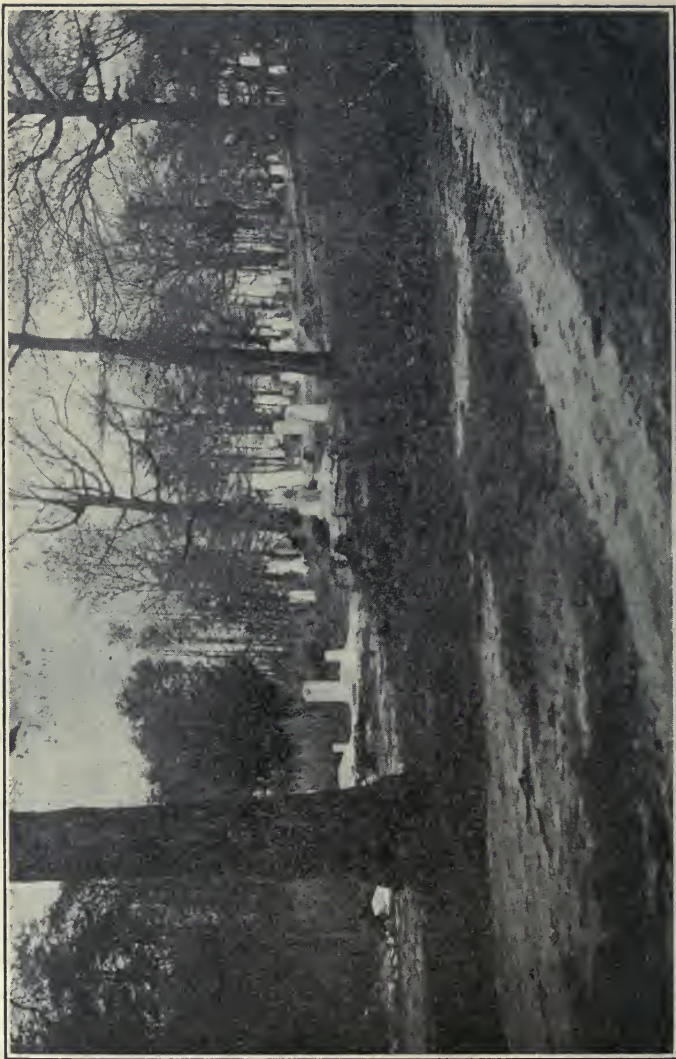
“Waal, they don’t carry ther’ guns like they uster. Thet’s the new church an’ nobody’s been shot in et yet.”

Down below the cemetery was a little wood-colored school-house. Looking at that I asked him how many scholars it registered.

“Waal, I ’low I oughter tell,” said he, “bein’ as I am one of the board, but I cayn’t carry nuthin’ in my head.”

The old man developed such a friendly attitude, even though he couldn’t carry anything in his head, I asked him in a confidential manner if he knew where I could get some moon-shine.

“Be keerful, Stranger,” said he, sinking his voice almost to a whisper. “Et might be all right, but a feller came in hyar a while back, an’ the boys thinkin’ he war a spy, tuk ’im hout an’ brushed ’im a leetle. But then you see he couldn’t give no account of ’imself or nuthin’. He came ter my house ’bout dark ter stay over night, an’ jes’ as he come in, Steve Howard come up with some o’ the boys, an’ says he hed some business with ’im down the road. The man saw has he hed ter go ’long, an’ they tuk ’im, tied ’im ter a tree, an’ brushed ’im a leetle with their bridle reins. But yer see he couldn’t tell nuthin’ ’bout ’iself, who he war, or what his name war. The



THE DARK CORNER BURYING-GROUND

Where many lay who had died with their boots on. The largest cemetery seen in my mountain travels.

Sheriff come in hyar arterwards ter see 'bout et, fer the man didn't turn up no moah, an' it war reported thet he war kill't. But the boys only brushed 'im a leetle. I 'low he war ashamed ter show 'is face agin to folks, an' as no one saw 'im no moah, they thought he war kill't."

I went on down past the school-house determined that I would tell my name, and all about myself, at the next place I came to. I had gone only a short distance when a turn in the road revealed a small frame house, and a woman in black stooping down, deeply engaged in planting something by the side of the road. Her black sunbonnet turned in my direction as, looking up, she displayed a kindly old face. Getting up out of the road, she said,

"I jes' saw some violets on my way ter the spring, an' I war settin' 'em out. They ar' real pretty, you know. You'll find Jim 'roun' t'other side of the house on the porch areadin' his paper. Dinner is all ready, an' I war jes' agoin arter the water. We ain't got much, but ye ar' welcome to what we hev. Go right 'roun t'other side o' the house, an' Jim will take yer hoss."

She was so kind and gentle in her manner, showing the true instinct of hospitality, I wondered at her being a product of such a neighborhood where the stranger might be tied to a tree and whipped for not giving his name, and another one cut up so as to "look like no man no moah," for returning hospitality shown him by "cussing."

Riding around to the other side of the house as directed, there on the porch was a stockly-built man, comfortably reading his newspaper. Looking up, at the sound of my horse's feet, and methodically folding up the paper, he took off his spectacles, and folding them up, laid them and the newspaper aside, and came down to me. He had on the most wonderfully pair of patched trousers I ever saw.

I told him promptly that I was a Government agent, and I gave him a full account of myself without loss of time. He paid no more attention to me than a red Indian would, but

looking at my horse, he seemed to be admiring her good points.

"Light," said he, "an' I'll take her up ter the barn an' give her her corn."

As I followed him into the barn, he asked,

"How many ears do you want her ter have?"

I told him, and he counted out the ears. He didn't seem to be inclined to talk, and I reached into one of my saddle-bags, and brought out the flask the stable man had given me with the corn in it.

"What's that?" said he as I held up the flask.

"A cheat," said I. "A fellow said he knew where he could get some 'good old corn' for fifty cents, and this is what he fetched."

All the world loves a joke, and so did this stocky man in the wonderfully-patched trousers. He snickered as he replied,

"Thet's a good un on you." And as we went into the house, he said,

"I must tell the ole 'oman 'bout et."

As we entered, the old lady came in the opposite door with her bucket on her arm, and he gleefully told her the joke.

"We didn't uster pot up our corn in the Dark Corner thet way," said he, as the old lady laughed too.

She invited me to a seat at the table next to him, while she sat opposite. She apologized for her "picked-up" dinner, saying she "warn't 'spectin' no company," and about all she had "fit ter eat" was the gingerbread, which Jim was very fond of. But I enjoyed her cold potatoes and fat pork, fully as well as the gingerbread.

Our conversation running along on the subject of whiskey making and blockading, she suddenly exclaimed,

"Why, Jim has blockaded all his life!"

Jim's talk was checked at once. With his mouth open and a bit of gingerbread near it, he looked across the table at his wife, and then glancing at me, said,

"I hed a nigger onect, thet blockaded some."

Laughingly I said,

"Don't lay it on to the nigger. I am not concerned much about your blockading, if I am a Government man."

Then looking across at the old lady again, he laughed too.

"I 'low et's all right," said he, "seein' the ole 'oman says so."

"I'd trust him anyhow," said she, with a toss of her head and an expressive snap, "can't yer see thet he's all right?"

"Waal, I uster blockade some," said Jim, evidently convinced that I was all right, "but the most of us hev given et up now."

While we were talking, a fine-looking, well-dressed girl, came bouncing into the room with a mail-bag slung under her arm.

"Hello, Pinkey!" exclaimed Jim, "how's all the folks down at Landrum?"

"Hello, Pinkey," exclaimed the old lady, "set up an' hev some gingerbread.

"I don't want nothing to eat, but I'll take a piece of gingerbread," said Pinkey, stepping up to the table and helping herself, as they all talked at once.

She carried the mail, and it struck me as remarkable that such a notoriously bad place should have a mere slip of a girl carrying the mail. I suggested taking her photograph, delivering the mail to Jim.

"Yes, come on; let's have our picture taken," she cried, dragging Jim by the shirt-sleeve. Her buggy was out in the road in front of Jim's old store, evidently abandoned now, with a row of rural free delivery boxes on posts in front of it. They went out there, and I took the picture. Then the wonderfully-patched trousers seemed to occur to Jim. Kicking out one leg, with a tremendous black patch down nearly the entire front of it, he exclaimed,

"How d'ye like them britches! Them's Dark Corner britches. The ole 'oman patched 'em. She likes patches!"

As Pinky swung herself up into her buggy, and we went

up on to the front porch, she driving off with a promise from me to send her one of the pictures, I did not think the Dark Corner merited its bad name after all.

"But things hev changed a good deal since the most on us hev quit making whiskey," said Jim, seated on the porch with his kindly old wife. "Low-down folks got ter makin' it so, we jes' naturally got turned agin et. Why, they would give et ter their chil'ren, an' make 'em drunk with et."



PINKY DELIVERING THE MAIL

Then pointing to the long range of mountains rising in front of us, he added,

"A few years back, I could 'a pintoed out ter yer the smoke from eighteen stills along in them mountains. Now we can't see none."

I asked him about the notorious Steve Howard, whereupon he replied with some show of indignation,

"Why, Steve is not a bad sort. He's my uncle, an' thar is nothin' agin him. He's sarved his time, an' he has a clean record. Don't owe the State nothin', and there's nothin' agin him."

As I drew from him story after story of happenings in the locality, my display of interest evidently encouraging him, he related the killing of one of the Howards, who in a fit of intoxication made a lone assault on a barricaded cabin, from over the door of which he was shot. There were six or seven of these Howards killed in fights of one sort or another, all brothers, he said. Only one of them was left, living up at the top of the mountain, where there is a little church in which another one of them was killed, and another man wounded. In this mix up, it was said, Deacon Gosnell, the pillar of the church, in reaching for his pistol, drew a flask of whiskey instead.

"But I hev always managed ter keep outer trouble," said Jim finally. "I hev never been indicted in my life, though I come pretty nigh et onect." And then he laughed, evidently at the thoughts of it.

"I was here on the porch when the revenues came awhippin' their hosses, an' atarin' in here, with their guns all loaded ready to shoot the fust man they seed. I had the finest lot of fruit thet year I ever had, an' my nigger was over thar' in the hollow runnin' some of it off. He got the still outer the way 'for they got t'im, but I lost all my fruit thet year."

"And such a nice lot of fruit too," said the old lady.

"But we've given it all up now," said he, "convinced that the country is better off without it."

"I wouldn't know," said the old lady, "where ter git enough now to fill my camfire bottle. Ef I did, I would git your flasks filled fer you, ef I hed ter fill 'em myself."

Jim directed me up over the mountain range, back into North Carolina again, saying I could reach the Deacon's house before night, and that it would be the best place for me to stay. I left the kindly old couple with regrets that I could not remain longer.

Near the mountain top, having stopped to photograph a cabin into which I saw a lot of little children disappear, I suddenly looked up to see a long gun over the shoulder of a

pale faced young man, in his shirt-sleeves. I surely thought I was on the point of being held up, but without a flicker, turning to my saddle-bags, I brought out the flask containing the "old corn."

"See what I've got," said I, holding it up.

The young fellow's eyes opened wider, as he jerked out,

"What's thet?"

As I explained to him the joke, he nearly doubled up, almost hitting me in the head with his gun. And then slapping his thigh as he straightened up, he said,

"Waal. you got beat thet time, didn't yer?"

"Can't you tell me where I can get some of the real stuff?" I asked.

"Yer kin git some et my house, I reckon. Thar war some thar yesterday," and pointing up the mountain, he directed me where to find the house.

"When yer git ter the church," said he, you go down a piece, an' then take the first path through the laurels. When you git through the laurels, yer look up an' yer'll see a cabin thar on the risin' jes' above the creek. Tell 'em I sent yer, an' p'haps you'll git et."

I went to the little church, where I paused long enough to look over the little burying-ground and photograph it. The church was shot full of holes, and the tallest tomb-stone in the burying-ground marked the grave of the Howard who was shot in his lonely assault on his neighbor's cabin. On the stone was the inscription,

"We miss his merry smile," and I wondered if it had been put there by the neighbor who shot him over the barricaded door.

I found the trail through the laurels as directed, and as my horse scrambled up the hill to the side of the cabin, a girl coming out, stood with arms folded as she demanded to know what I wanted. As I rested over my saddle horn, I told her I wanted some moonshine.

"We hain't got enny," she snapped.

"Oh, yes you have," I replied.

She darted into the cabin, and in a second was out again with an old woman whose hair hung in two long braids down her back. Her face bespoke intelligence, kindness, and good humor. There was not a vicious line in it anywhere, but one could see there was grim determination in her jaws if need be. She looked at me, whispered something to the girl, and the two fixed their gaze upon me.

"Yes," said I, "I want some of your moonshine."



THE CHURCH SHOT FULL OF HOLES

Then, the woman turning to the cabin with a bewildered air, a boy came out, and there was a whispered conference.

"Who said you could get it hyar?" demanded the girl.

I described the young fellow in his shirt-sleeves, carrying a gun over his shoulder, and wearing a soft, black felt hat.

"That's 'im," said the girl turning to the old woman, and the old woman nodded her head assentingly.

"We hain't got none," added the girl turning to me again, but ef yo've got the money an' some'in' ter pot et inter, maybe we kin git yer some."

Dismounting, I handed her my flasks, telling her she could keep the corn that was in one of them, and while she and the boy darted off behind the cabin, the old lady invited me in. Seated by the fireplace opposite the seat I was directed to take, was a man all drawn up with paralysis. He was the last of the Howard brothers, the other six or seven having been killed.

The interior of the cabin reminded me very much of those described as existing in pioneer days. It was snugly built, comfortably though rudely furnished, and a model of neatness. On two pegs above the fireplace, within easy reach of the open door was a gun. In the fireplace was a Dutch oven, in which bread was being baked, the smouldering embers on its iron lid being occasionally turned by the old woman, who good naturedly talked with me. The boy and girl returning with my flasks filled, the boy said, as he handed me the one carried by him,

"Thet's the best whiskey yer ever tasted," and in proof that I was in earnest about wanting it, I tasted it. It was enough to knock down a stronger man than I.

I invited them all out to have their pictures taken, assenting to which, the girl hustled herself up a ladder into the loft where throwing open a shutter, she donned a spotted waist and red skirt, while I set up my camera outside.

After the picture was taken, and I had mounted my horse about to depart, I asked her whether she were not afraid.

"Afraid of what?" she asked.

"Well," said I, from my seat astride my horse, "I've got your moonshine, and I've got your picture. I might be a 'revenue' for all you know."

She looked at me with a puzzled air for a moment, and then as her face lighted up, she exclaimed,

"Pooh! Yer don't ketch no revenues pokin' 'round hyar in these mountains alone. They'd be too derved skeered, an' they've got a heap better sense."

Leaving the kindly-disposed and trusting family, I rode



A FAMILY OF MOONSHINERS

I got their moonshine and I got their photograph. The old man drawn up with paralysis was the last of the Howard brothers, all the others having been killed.

down past the remains of a cabin partially destroyed by fire. It had belonged to a family of moonshiners who had gotten into some difficulty with neighbors who informed on them, it was said, after which, fearing a raid, they went to the cotton-mills. Fire was then put to the cabin.

It was in the gloaming, as I urged Rubberneck on to make the Deacon's house down in Boo-goo-land before he went to bed. Down past high mountain cliffs, through rock-lined creeks we sped, with the roar of water pouring down the mountain-sides. Around mountain spurs, in and out we wound. An occasional cabin loomed up black in a darkening cove, and at last, deep down, in the bottom of a gorge seemingly far away, I discerned a tiny light, diamond-like in the intense darkness that was now enshrouding the land. I took it to be in Boo-goo-land and in the Deacon's house. Rubberneck carried me on, winding down and around the mountain-side, on across a creek and straight out to the cabin light.

As I reined up before an open cabin door, I saw a man with long, thin chin whiskers, seated before the fireplace, expounding something in a loud voice, like a patriarch of old. My horse's hoof-beats having failed to attract his attention, I leaned over my saddle almost into the door, as I called out, "How d'y," as natural as one to the manner born.

The old patriarch, jumping up from his seat and stumbling over a chair in his haste, answered back.

"'Light, Stranger; 'light!"

And coming out into the darkness, he bid one of his boys, who followed him, take my horse and give her corn.

"You ar' welcome to our fare, Stranger, ef you kin put up with et," said he.

He gave me a seat by the fireplace, while his wife without removing her pipe from her mouth, proceeded to prepare my supper. I protested against their putting themselves out any for me, to which protests the old Deacon replied,

"Yer've got ter hev your supper. Go on ole 'oman an' fix

et up. We don't 'low no stranger ter go ter bed hyar without his supper."

She sliced off the fat pork held against her breast, the wonder being that she did not slice herself. Her little daughter swabbed out the frying-pan with the same rag with which she swabbed off the oilcloth on one end of the table, and the pork was fried and the biscuits baked in the same pan. I ate the biscuits and fat pork by the light of a chimneyless kerosene lamp, while the old Deacon tried to keep a fire going with a handful or two of trash he sporadically gathered up.

I certainly appreciated the hospitality, which was of the truest and noblest kind. There were no apologies, no excuses, and no attempt to evade the issue of a hungry traveler's stomach by quietly acquiescing to his protests against their disturbing themselves.

The Deacon's home consisted of two cabins, one used as kitchen, dining and living room, and the other as a sleeping apartment. He and his wife surrendered their bed to me in the sleeping-room, joining their little daughter in the lean-to, where they evidently bunked in together. Our breakfast consisted of the same kind of biscuits as served for supper; more fat pork, a sauce-pan of boiled rice and a big tin pot of coffee. There was a cracked jelly glass on the table with molasses in it. I took a spoonful of the molasses on my plate, and saw that it evidently was a grave-yard for flies. But I pushed the flies aside, and a fly in my biscuit I carelessly tossed away, for I would not have shown the slightest depreciation of the hospitality shown me, for a hundred flies.

And now to conclude with, the Deacon was rich in lands and corn and stock. When I asked him why the country was called Boo-goo-land, he said he didn't know, unless it was because he was the biggest "Boo-goo" in it. When he called his wife out to have her picture included in the family group I was preparing to take, she objected, saying she "warn't goin' ter have her pic'ter took in her rags, ter hev 'em make fun of way off yonder."



THE DEACON OF BOO-GOO-LAND

Some of his family and tenants. Note the physical appearance of the little boy. At the cotton-mill such a type would be picked out as an example of the results of child labor.

"Oh, come on out," said the old Deacon, as I had him seated in front of the kitchen-cabin. "Never mind yer rags; everybody knows thet I've got money enough ter buy yer better ones, an' ef yer don't like the ones ye've got, I'll buy yer some more."

But she would not have her picture taken, saying in a very matter-of-fact way, that if anyone were to show her picture around, and she didn't kill him it would be because the gun didn't fire.

When I went to pay the old fellow for his hospitality, he did not want to accept a cent. Finally upon my insisting, he said he would take pay for my horse's corn only, and in making change, he drew out of his pocket a fist full of money.

As I left his home, and took my way up over the mountain that inclosed one of the sides of Boo-goo-land, I wondered at the peculiar nature of these rough, hardy people, who so kind, and attentive to the wants of a belated stranger, thought no more of getting into a fight and killing an opponent than killing a fly. And then perhaps too, they would "miss his merry smile."

CHAPTER XXX.

THE STORY OF PIEDMONT MILLS.

I BROUGHT back with me out of the Dark Corner the story of the Piedmont Mills. I got the story in part on my first investigation, when assigned to photograph cows, cow-sheds, and such things, for the agent who was studying welfare work at the mills. At Piedmont, I photographed on my own responsibility, a little kindergarten class, a village street and an old woman leading her calf to drink. The village street and the kindergarten class were products of the mill. The old woman was a product of the Dark Corner. Where she came from, she said, they made moonshine in every hollow.

A schoolmaster who had taught school in various dark corners, related how when Greenville, the county-seat, was only a jail and court-house, with a few scattered houses around, in the midst of hungry plantations, and hungry people who never raised enough to eat, they used to try the moonshiners and sometimes send them to jail. The Government having adopted the practice of paying rewards for information leading to the arrest of illicit whiskey-makers, the moonshiners would get together and inform on one of their number. A raid would follow with the capture perhaps of a battered old copper kettle, and a prisoner or two, carried off to the county-seat. The summoning of the informer and witnesses would follow, and a host of volunteers would come tagging on behind, with the result that the prosecution and the trial judge would become so mixed up in such a maze of conflicting testimony, they couldn't tell whether they had the real moonshiner or

somebody else. Sometimes a week or two would be spent in trying to straighten out the tangle, and the longer the better for the moonshiners, for they all claimed witness fees and mileage, whether anyone was convicted or not. Should the prosecution succeed in convicting one of them, he would as lief go to jail, particularly when winter was coming on, and he knew his cabin wasn't snug and warm, and perhaps his corn crop had failed him. Frequently upon being convicted the old moonshiner would rise in court, and addressing the trial judge, say,

"Jedge, I'd like ter go hume, get in my crap, an' fix the ole 'oman and childers up fer the winter, an' then I'll come back an' serve out the time."

And the judge acquiescing, the moonshiners would all go off together, divide up their reward for informing, and with their warrants for their fees and mileage, for the State did not have enough money to pay them in cash, they would buy grain and make more moonshine.

Elsewhere the State was struggling heroically to overcome the effects of the civil war. Her ruined plantations were beginning to recover. Columbia, her capital, was rising from the ashes of her former homes and public buildings, and yet there were thousands of practically homeless families and hungry people in the land. Cotton was king before the war, and after the conflict those who had anything turned their attention to cotton again. But cotton was no longer king. Just as the South seemed to be recovering from the disastrous effects of the war, the bottom dropped out of cotton, and the outlook seemed hopeless.

Public opinion always had been against manufacturing. The land was owned comparatively by a few, who under the old tenant system preferred the poor being kept on the lands, where their condition in the cotton belt was inferior to that of the negroes in many respects. The South had depended upon the North for its clothing and tools, just as it depended upon the Yankee peddler for its clocks, and Kentucky and

Tennessee for its live stock and food. But after the war, something different must be done. The land was literally filled with the homeless and hungry ones. In many instances they had neither the strength, knowledge or wherewithal to till the lands. The freed negro was better off, for having both strength and knowledge to put in a crop, he at least could get fat meat and meal enough to keep him until his crop was made.

This was about the situation when men with enterprise and brains, seeing that the South's weakness had been in carrying all its eggs in one basket, so to speak, saw no reason why it should not spin its cheap cotton into yarn. With this in view, Yankee machinery was bought and a few little spinning-mills were put up here and there with Yankee superintendents to run them. Then rose men of still more enterprise and nerve, and going up into Greenville County, they selected a site on a water power going to waste, and said,

"Here we will build a mill, and call it Piedmont."

But when they looked about for labor, they found the poor, half-starved families of the plantations unfit. Many of them had sunk into such a hopeless state of decay that even to-day the South is ashamed to have the truth known. But up in the mountains from Piedmont was that hardy old type of mountaineer, bushwhacker and moonshiner, who wasn't afraid to work, and would very often fight for the very reason that he had nothing better to do. In groping about for labor, the entrepreneurs at Piedmont got hold of the better class of few who wanted jobs. They brought them down from the bordering mountains, and with mules and teams they set them to work to break the ground, dig the trenches and lay the foundations for the cotton-mill. They then put them to laying the bricks, damming up the river and building the mill. This work done the mountain men returned to their homes with their savings, smashed their old whiskey-stills, put their mules to ploughing, built themselves and families good houses, made improvements on their lands, and laid the foundations for



A PRODUCT OF THE DARK CORNER

"Where she came from," she said, "they made moonshine in every hollow."

agricultural wealth in that part of the country that had been little dreamed of.

Nor was this all. They took the story of the cotton-mill back to the mountains with them. They told how the new-fangled, Yankee machines, arriving by the car-load at Piedmont, were going to spin cotton into yarn as good as the Yankees ever spun themselves. They told how they needed nimble little fingers and watchful eyes down there to guide the spinning, and active little boys to throw the full bobbins off and put on empty ones. The story was carried farther up into the mountains, and around into the Dark Corner. With it went a great ray of hope. The story was told to the worthless, prematurely old fathers and mothers in their abodes of misery, surrounded by their children, like pigs in a pen. They were told how some of those children could make more money in a day, down at Piedmont, than their parents had ever made in a month. And they marveled at the tales.

The shrunken, tobacco-juiced, whiskey-steeped old cabin dweller, incredulous at first, knew that the thrifty landowner did not lie, but at first he refused to go. While he talked it over with his wife, others more thrifty than he, decided to go and see. The listless old mother did not want to leave her mountain home, but harder times came. A judge at Greenville had declared that if he caught any more moonshiners down there with a trumped-up case, he would put them all in jail, and he sent them all home without their fees. And so with no more warrants for witness fees and mileage, and starvation in many instances staring them in the face, they began to think seriously about the cotton-mill. Word came back from those who had already gone, and then the worst began to move. Some could carry all their possessions in a wheel-barrow, but they moved, slowly, cautiously at first, and then they went down in droves. The story of the cotton-mill was no dream.

The children of those idle old parents—idle because they had grown up without having anything to do—were put to work in that big mill at Piedmont. Children who had toiled not,

and who were growing up in idleness to become vagabonds of the future, arriving at the mills, in many instances bare-footed and in rags, were put to work spinning and doffing, learning to make money, and learning its value and what it would bring. They were given better houses to live in than they had ever seen; their parents were shown how to take care of them and keep them clean; they were provided with better food than they ever had before, and were provided with schools and churches. Ministers and teachers came in, whiskey and murder went out, and a great wave of industrial prosperity and education began sweeping over the entire country.

The proposal to spin cotton in the South was at first looked upon by the Yankee spinner, more or less as a joke. The machine manufacturer was willing to supply the machinery, and the Yankee was willing to go down and put it up and boss the job, but he reported that his Southern brother couldn't spin, and was too lazy to learn. But he had not counted on the children. When yarns and cotton began to arrive in the Northern market as good as the Yankee ever wove or spun, something was the matter. Cotton-spinning in the South was no longer a joke. Then it was discovered that the matter lay in the children. They were learning to spin as good yarn as the Yankee ever spun when his children commenced more than half a century before. But this fact was ignored. The child-spinner and doffer had grown to manhood and womanhood in the North and were forgotten. Discovered in the South it was supposed that the child was employed because his labor was cheap, but if the investigators had investigated they would have found that the education of the child and its labor was costing the manufacturer more for like returns in product than adult labor was costing in the North.

However, hired reformers, investigators and muck-rakers went South, and the cry of the child went North. But, that cry of the child was never uttered by the child himself. It came from the agitator, the Socialist and labor union delegate, who always follow in the wake of industry and enterprise,

their chief enterprise being most marked in their ability to make a noise. My! How the wheels of industry would go round, if they only depended upon noise.

The labor delegate, who wants no one to work but his chosen few, arriving on the scene rather late, found the children of the mountaineer an independent lot, who told him to get out, and when he did not get out they put him out. Wrathful he returned whence he came and spread the cry of the child, which neither he nor any other living being ever heard. He told of little children doing man's work in the close, confining air of the cotton-mill; of their laboring around machines dangerous to life and limb; of their being maimed and crippled and murdered—lies as wicked and deliberate as ever emanated from the minds of men. The professional uplift worker elaborated upon and circulated the lies, to gather in the shekels and give himself a job. What did he care about the child! He called his work educational work, and he educated the people through our churches and schools and Sunday Schools; through books, and magazines and newspapers; to believe that children of "the purest American strain, whose fathers fought at Guilford Court House and Cowpens, and followed Marion to victory," were being murdered in the cotton-mills, and that child industry and labor was a crime.

According to this educational tirade, these children were not only those whose "fathers had fought at Guilford Court House and Cowpens," but they were the children of a splendid race, living upon productive farms, yet in the same breath that lauded their fathers as heroes following Marion to victory, at the mills they were stigmatized as worthless and lazy types of humanity, needing legislation to drive them back to their farms, where they would become heroes again. And many of our good ministers and well-meaning educators, from the seclusion of their homes and comfortable studies, took up the cry based upon the misrepresentations of the hired agitators and professional uplift workers—special interests—and added their voice to the cry for legislation against the child.

When I learned the facts—when I realized how the idle children of the shiftless parents, from the isolated mountain coves and covert hollows, were greatly benefited and improved by employment at the cotton-mills, many of those good ministers, educators and missionaries, fruitlessly working among the hills and hollows for the betterment of those children, said to me upon my pointing to the mills and the good work they have done,

“What! would you have these beautiful mountains depopulated?”

Now, I would say to them:

Leave for a little while those cozy studies in those dark corners, where you have been merely scratching the surface, and go down into the Dark Corner of Greenville County, and see for yourselves what the Piedmont Mills, and those other mills which have since sprung up around, have done for the country, for the State and for the Nation as a whole. Saddle your horse and go down the old State road from North Carolina, but don't look up sniffing the balmy mountain air and watching the azure sky only, but look down and around. Look at the deserted cabins by the wayside, and recall how every little hollow had one, where they made the moonshine too. They are very much like the little cabins you are familiar with, up in your dark corners, only yours are still filled with ragged, half-clothed, tangled-haired children, listless mothers and discouraged fathers, where they have any fathers at all, yet you wonder why such children do not go to your schools.

As you pass the deserted cabins with their greensward grown up around, where formerly there was mud, ill odors and filth, remember that they once contained the child that toiled not, neither did he spin, just as they still are where you are trying to give them the alphabet when they want bread.

Recall to your mind's eye how their listless old mothers, with a mouthful of tobacco, once sat by these cheerless fireplaces without fire, with crooked chimneys and men too lazy to



A VILLAGE STREET AT PIEDMONT, S. C.

Where the children of a lawless people in some instances, poverty stricken in other instances, and decadent in others, have been educated by labor to become good and useful citizens.

make themselves or their chimney straight, their sole diversion being the whiskey-jug, and then a fight. You know the rest—a funeral procession and four feet of earth.

Who can blame them? I am free to confess that I should probably make whiskey, and get up a fight, too, if forced to live such an empty life as theirs.

When you get near the foot of the Blue Ridge, talk with "old man Hightower," and he will tell you he was once the worst whiskey-maker of them all. He will tell you, as you look at his sleek, well-fed mules, and the good farm-house he owns, how the cabin dwellers once lay around, and he could get all the labor he wanted for a peck of meal. Now it costs him a good dollar in cash, but it is worth a dollar, where before it wasn't worth a cent. He will tell you that though those cabin dwellers are nearly all gone, the land is worth more and farms cannot be bought. But in case he fails to convince you, turn to the last Federal Census Report for this township. Analyze it carefully and you will find that, notwithstanding the depletion of the township as shown by the empty cabins and by what Mr. Hightower has told you, the population has decreased since the mills have been taking people away, less than one per cent, while on the other hand the total population in the county has increased more than 140 per cent.

A further analysis of the Census Report will show you that, notwithstanding the removal of the families from the farms to the mills, the number of farm-owners in the county has increased, while there has been a corresponding decrease in the number of tenants, and when you learn these things, put that question to yourself that you have put to me so many times,

"Would you have these beautiful mountains of ours depopulated?"

Go to Arthur Hodges, and he will complete the story of the cotton-mills. He will tell you how he broke the ground at Piedmont more than thirty miles away, and as many years ago, and he will tell you how that single mill has done more for the country and for the Nation than all the free schools and

colleges combined. He will tell you how from its work-rooms, from their lesson at the spinning-frames, the child-toilers of the old fathers who "followed Marion to victory,"—on the pages of the uplift story-books, and in the eye of "progressive" orators — have gone forth fine men and women. He will tell you how, learning their lessons well, they went from spinning and doffing to winding and weaving. Some became card hands. some speeder-tenders, and some slubber tenders, and so on, progressing step by step, down into the weave-room. Many of them passed from that mill, not with a smattering knowledge of Latin and Greek, but with a practical knowledge, if only how to run a loom and earn a living. He will tell you how those very children, who, our up-lift workers, reformers and "progressives" tell us, are being murdered at the mill, have become bosses in the card-rooms, bosses in the weave-rooms, boss mechanics and superintendents for other mills, and even mill-owners and mill-presidents. He will tell you how from that great school of seventy thousand spindles, and nearly two thousand looms, at Piedmont, has gone forth a veritable army of industrial workers, supplying other parts of the South, not only with skilled labor, but practical men of brains, to direct their work where before there was not mechanical genius enough to make a tub, unless it was a whiskey tub.

You may learn from Arthur Hodges' old father, for that is the way history should be written, how the old State road up through Greenville County was built about eighty years ago with Irish labor. It needs no great stretch of the imagination to picture many of those Irish laborers building their shacks and cabins on the rocky mountain-side, just as some of us can remember the same class of labor building theirs on the rocks of Manhattan. Yet your orators declaim that they were "the heroes of Guilford Court House and Cowpens who followed Marion to victory."

Old Mr. Hodges will tell you how strong some of these men were in their day. How old man Pruette would shoulder a a keg of whiskey and carry it up the mountain-side as though

it were a mere toy, but his children and grandchildren were decadent, and couldn't carry a jug. Then remember that the Irishman is not a good farmer. But give him a job, if it is only a policeman's job, and he will make good nearly every time.¹ And that is what he has done at Piedmont.

I was riding along the road near Hendersonville, when I chanced upon an elderly man driving a good team. I asked him if he knew anyone who had gone to the cotton-mills.

"Oh, yes," said he, "I know a heap of folks."

"Give me the name of one," said I.

"Well, there is Dick O'Steen. I know him pretty well."

And then I asked the questions on my schedule and got the story of Dick O'Steen. Twenty-odd years ago he was living with his wife and five children, in a one-room box-house in the mountains of Transylvania County. He blacksmithed a little, and could read and write some, although he had no schooling. Someone told him that if he would take his children to Piedmont, they could get work in the mill and make a good living, and so they went. The children were all under fourteen.

"Now what has become of that family?" I asked, when my informant had told this.

"I was down there last year," he answered, "and the old man seemed to be doing pretty well. He had eight or ten acres in cotton and showed me nigh onto a dozen houses he owned himself."

"Well, the children! I want to know about the children," said I.

"The children? Well, let me see," said the man, "Frank was the oldest boy. He is now superintendent at the Poe Mills getting four thousand dollars a year. Ceff is at the Brandon Mills getting about the same, and the youngest boy is a professional base-ball player getting more than the Governor of the State. The two girls are married, keeping house and raising a family of their own."

¹ John C. Calhoun was the son of a poor Irishman and he was educated in Connecticut.

If you have any doubts about this story, look in a textile directory and see what names are given as superintendents of the Poe and Brandon Mills respectively, at Greenville, South Carolina. And as for the base-ball player earning more than the Governor of the State, you may find him down in the Great North State, or South Carolina, perhaps, at the head of the "Hornets", walloping the duff out of the learned college teams that have the boldness to contest the field with him.

And since the mountaineer-farmer told me about this O'Steen family, I have met mill-men who received their training at Piedmont, and who distinctly remember the old man and his five children upon their arrival at the mill—the quaint ways of the old man who never had seen cotton grow, and referred to the sprouting seeds in a newly planted field as potato slips—and the children, bare footed and hungry—hungry for something to do as well as for something to eat, to make their lives better than a mere existence scarcely better than that of the lower order of animals.

You may say this is an exception to the rule. No doubt it is. All children working in a cotton-mill cannot become superintendents or professional base-ball players, any more than all college students can become college professors or presidents. But go into the Dark Corner and ask Jim Center what has become of the poor families who went from there. He will give you, no doubt, as he gave me, the records of many families which are now hidden in the archives of the Bureau of Labor at Washington. They tell of the little children who toiled not in the dark coves of the Saluda mountains, but going to the cotton-mills, and getting jobs, they grew and developed. Some went to school while their elder brothers and sisters worked, and while some of those who worked became mill-bosses and mill-superintendents, some of the others became school-teachers and County superintendents, while some of the families, more Saxon than Celt, having the land-hunger instinct of the Saxon, returned to the farm where they bought the land with their savings and are now doing well.

In getting this information, I said to Jim,

"For goodness' sake, Jim! Can't you name someone who went to the mills, and didn't do well?" And Jim answered,

"Oh, yes, there was so-and-so, but he didn't have no children, and he never did do well."

And so I found throughout my investigation, those who did not do well at the mills were those who had no children big enough to work, or else too big to learn, and were "no account nohow."

Now let us take a glance at what has transpired around Piedmont within the thirty-odd years since Arthur Hodges came down from the foothills and broke the ground for the mill. There are no hungry plantations with hungry tenant farmers there now, but there are cotton-mill chimneys piercing the sky all around. There are schools and school-houses and churches, where before there was little else but poverty and rags. The county-seat where the moonshiner once came to bear false witness against his neighbor, because he had nothing better to do, is a thriving city now of banks and offices, stores, shops and hotels, and money enough to expend in marvelous public improvements, a recent appropriation for the purpose having amounted to three hundred and fifty thousand dollars.

Turning to the Census Reports again, they show the population around Greenville increasing by veritable leaps and bounds, and mark you, this increase is not from foreign immigration, but from "the purest American strain that still exists in this country."¹

With the close of the decade after the Piedmont Mills began sweeping the families from the farms into its yawning doors "to murder the children," the Census Report shows that the population increased 68.4 per cent. But the "murders" had not yet taken place; we must wait another decade for the census-taker to make his returns, and what do we find? We

¹ From Senator Beveridge's Speech before the United States Senate, in which he declared the children of these people were being murdered at the mills.

find an increase over the last census of 18.1 per cent, but with another decade and more mills going up and running, we find an increase of 20.7 per cent. With the close of the decade 1910, there is still an increase shown of 27.8 per cent. Taking the four decades since the Piedmont Mills first began drawing our mountain people with their "splendid physical inheritance" to the mills to be ruined, and with nineteen more mills added, and nearly a million spindles, to continue their murderous work, in that one county alone, we find that the population has increased 207.1 per cent. That looks like murdering them, doesn't it?

Let us see what more they have done. Beginning in a poverty-stricken part of our country, with little more than Southern enterprise and nerve, Yankee machinery and Yankee faith in his Southern brother to pay for it, and cotton as low as four cents a pound, they have helped send that cotton up to twelve and fourteen cents, and now in the year 1910, according to the State Commissioner's Report, in that one county alone, they worked up more than ninety-five thousand (95,877) bales of cotton, and consumed fifty-three thousand tons of coal, turning out finished product to the value of nearly nine and a half million dollars, (\$9,421,097,) of which over a million and a half, (\$1,614,613) was paid to six thousand two hundred and forty-two wage earners supporting village populations numbering in all sixteen thousand one hundred persons, where thirty-six years ago there was nothing.

And the Federal Census Report shows that since the first of those mills began running, the value of the farm property in that one county of Greenville has increased from less than a million dollars, (983,053) in 1870, to over eighteen and a half million dollars (\$18,563,419) or an increase of 1,788.8 per cent.



A KINDERGARTEN CLASS AND TEACHER AT PIEDMONT

Fathers and mothers of such children as these once worked as children in the cotton-mill. Their grand-parents once lived in poverty on the farms. One of the results of child labor.

CHAPTER XXXI.

WELFARE WORK.

THE cotton-mill had its dark chapter. But while the reformers and agitators were looking for the skunk in the wood-pile, the black snake had wriggled away. It is usually so. Muck-rakers who deliberately set out to find the muck, gape at the gnat and swallow the camel. They missed the dark chapter of the cotton-mill. But it was that dark chapter that gave rise to a most wonderful work that is the big mill's pride to-day. And when the reformers and agitators saw that work in which they had no finger in the pie, they exclaimed deprecatingly,

"Oh, they did it to get their labor cheaper," or "They do it because they know it makes labor more efficient and they get more out of it."

The dark chapter of the cotton-mill was when the big mills of the Piedmont region began turning their wheels, and the hungry people were gathered in from the plantations around. No particular attention had been ever given to these people. For the most part they were completely ignored. The negro was conspicuous. From the days of his bondage, he had stirred things up. He made his presence known. Even in his most unhappy state, he sang and he danced. In his lowest state of primitive savagery, he made the woods ring with his wild orgies and voodoo dances. There was virility in his savagery; and humor in his slow imitative progress of his white master. The planter's children were allowed to play with his children, and in many instances when they were freed, the planter provided Sunday Schools for them and taught

them. But the poor whites, the remains of a decadent civilization, the very reverse of a primitive condition, were not only ignored, but the planter's children were not allowed to come in contact with them at all, and the chasm between them was as wide and effective as a Chinese wall.

The principal of a graded school at a big cotton-mill in lower North Carolina said to me,

"I never knew anything about these children until they put up the mill and I came here to teach them. I was allowed to play with the negro children on our plantation, and father had a Sunday School for them, but the poor whites—we had nothing to do with them whatever."

When the big mills went up, it was these poor whites who were first gathered in. The negro had been tried in a few sporadic attempts to start a cotton-mill before the war, and he had proved a failure as a mill-worker. Naturally very much of a nocturnal creature, he would spend his nights in frolics and dances. When put at light work, such as that required in spinning and weaving, he not only depended upon the machines to do all the work, but he would fall asleep over them, and as a freed laborer, he would not work to the factory whistle. The whistle might blow, and blow in vain. When the mill-gates closed against him for being late, he did not care. It meant another day's idleness to him.

I was told that in the silk-mills at Fayetteville, where negro children are employed, the parents enter into an agreement with the manufacturer consenting that corporal punishment be inflicted upon their children for violating the rules, or for not keeping up with their work. But I have never heard a word of this mentioned by any of our reformers or child-labor agitators.

Knowing that the negroes could not be depended upon, and inasmuch as they were most valuable on the farms, the big mill entrepreneurs believing they could give the vast army of unemployed whites something to do, first gathered them in from the plantations around. They put them into their neat,

new cottages, and supplied them with food, when lo, they began dying like sheep with the rot! At the Pelzer mills I heard it stated that a train-load of them were practically wiped out. What a story this would have made for the muck-rakers! But they did not get it. The idea that the Southern mills were going to spin cotton with the unskilled labor at hand was ridiculed, and the really dark chapter at the new mills escaped notice.

With sickness and death all around, the mill-men must have been thrown into a veritable panic. To-day they cannot be induced to say much about it. But they went to work to face the problem. They got skilled physicians upon the scene. They spared neither means nor expense to discover the cause of the malady and mortality and to check it. The cause was soon ascertained. It scarcely seems credible, but it is true nevertheless.

It was found that many of the very poor gathered in from the plantations and the country lying out around, had sunk to such a low state of degradation that they neither knew how to take care of themselves, nor properly prepare and eat the food which they suddenly found themselves supplied with in unstinted quantities. They gave it to their children barely cooked, or not cooked at all, and the children stuffed themselves with it and literally rolled up and died.

"For God's sake, take their rations away from them!" more than one doctor was heard to cry.

In the pine woods, on the sand-hills,¹ and along the rivers, whence these people came, they had managed to exist, or at least the toughest of them survived and existed, on their meager diet of cracked corn and hog meat. But the mortality among them must have been enormous, and still is among those that are left. Dr. Charles Wardell Stiles, in his quest

¹ These people were known variously, dependent upon the character or part of the country they were in, as "Sand-lappers," "Marsh tackies," and "Crackers," the latter name being most universally known. They differ materially from the "Hill Billys," of the mountain foothills, and the "Valley Crackers" and "Gulley Jumpers," of Eastern Tennessee and Northern Alabama. I have heard the negroes use the latter terms in speaking of them derisively.

for the hook-worm, tells of visiting a family consisting of father, mother and five children, and out in the pine woods he counted fifteen graves of their children who had died. He asked the neighboring physician what had killed those fifteen children.

"I don't know," he replied, "but if you can tell me what is killing that girl over there, I will tell you what killed those fifteen."

I asked a country physician in Central Georgia what he knew about Dr. Stiles' hook-worm disease.

"That 'ar new craze?" queried he. "You read so much about it in the papers. Well, I don't know much about that 'ar worm, but I do know that these people are full o' worms, an' they always had 'em,—big uns and little uns. An' the farther South you go, the worse they get. I remember a family down in Southern Alabama living in the pine woods. That family was one of the worst sights I ever did see. The oldest boy was over twenty, an' he looked to be about sixteen. I saw him eat his hominy an' fat pork gravy until I thought he would burst open. He never did 'pear to get enough to eat. When he couldn't get any more hominy and pork gravy down hisself, he was still hungry. It is that hunger that makes them eat any kind of trash. Their bellies stick out like pin-cushions, an' they are always cravin' something to put into them. I have known them even to pour sand down their throats."

It was some such people as these that gave the big mills in the Piedmont region their black chapter. At the smaller mills the evolution of the poverty-stricken was slower and more gradual. There were not so many of this class of people thrown upon the mill-management at once, and the smaller mill-owners or managers usually understood them better. These owners or managers were usually small farmers, who always had had more or less to do with this class of people, and in beginning their small manufacturing enterprises they handled them very much as they had handled them on their

farms. They paid them low wages or paid them whatever they felt like giving them, and the transition from the farm to the factory was not so sudden as at the big mills. And then the worst of them were not thrown upon them all at once.

On a visit to a small mill in South Carolina, where for thirty miles between there and the foothills of the Blue Ridge, a "Hill Billy" had told me the soil was "about as thick as a rabbit's hide," the principal of the mill stated that he had given a man a job to help unload cotton. The fellow was not able to do much, and at noon he wandered away, presumably to get his dinner. On his return to the mill after an absence of more than an hour he was informed that he must in the future be more prompt. Indicating with his head that he wanted to speak with the mill-man aside, and the mill-man complying with his wish, he said,

"Mister, I ain't hed nuthin' ter eat, an' my family ain't hed nuthin' fur two days."

Provisions were at once ordered sent to the man's house, and he was told to go home and eat. The next day they were all sick, and before the mill-man knew it, and could procure a doctor to examine them, one or two of the children died.

Near the Atlantic Seaboard, I visited a mill at which the Superintendent pointed out to me just such a family which had recently arrived.

"We had to take their rations away from them," said he. "They all got sick, and the doctor said it was nothing but over-eating. Why, they would sit up at night to eat."

During our conversation, referring to this family, an interesting side-light was here thrown upon the franchise which requires voters to be able to read and write.

"About election time," said the Superintendent, "I thought I would have the old man and eldest son vote, as the election was going to be pretty close. So I told him to take his boy and register. I did not think any more about it until election day when I directed him to vote. Then the old man said he hadn't registered, and explained that the Registrar had

refused to put either him or his son down because they couldn't read. I just went over to that Registrar to see what was the matter with him. I was mad.

"Why," said the Registrar, "I warn't goin' ter register them poor whites. They couldn't read, an' I knew they wouldn't vote our way."

"I told him that I had them all fixed, and that they would vote the way I told them to."

"'Well, then,' said the Registrar 'you should have brought them over yourself; I warn't goin' ter take no chances.'"

Farther on down to the very coast, I was given other examples of such families as these. At one of the mills near Wilmington, the management told me that upon receiving such, they were put under medical supervision at once. At Kinston, one such family was described as having an unusually large number of children, coming to the mill filled with malaria and swamp-fever, and unfitted for work. At the expense of the mill they were treated and purged until they became quite a good family of wage-earners, and fully competent to take care of themselves. Then they moved off to another mill, which it may be presumed paid them higher wages.

While the small mills which went up, in many instances under the farm-like management of owners belonging to a class of small landowners, who understood generally the class of poor whites that came straggling into them for employment, and to whom they could give their personal attention, it was not so with the big mills which swept these people off the plantations and out of the pine woods and swamps by the car-load. The big mill-managers were unprepared for a holocaust of any such people. Although in many instances they had had them around all their lives, they did not know them. They had not realized the state of degradation to which they had descended. It was due to this that the many attempts to establish mills before the war failed. A correspondent of the Charleston News, writing from Sparta,

Georgia, in in 1855, and quoted in Frederic Law Olmstead's book, "The Seaboard Slave States," said :

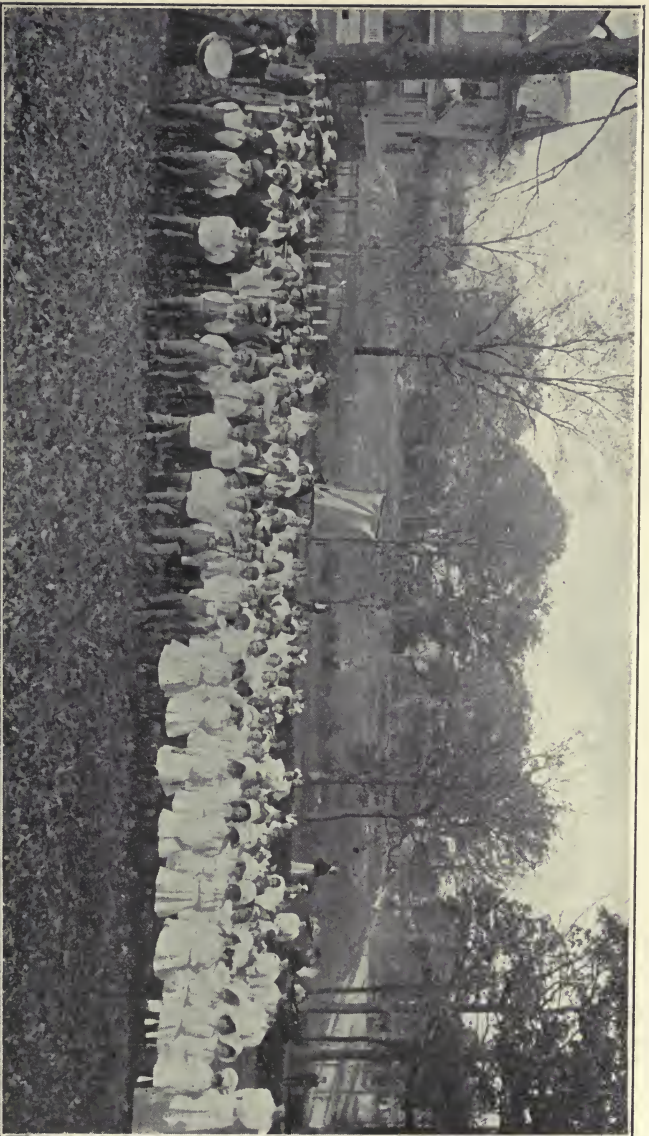
A large cotton factory has been in operation here about three years, but is now about being closed, and to-day will probably terminate its existence. It unpleasantly reminded us of the fate of a similar enterprise which so signally failed, after a brief career, in our city. Why is it so? It would seem to be reasonable, at least, that, surrounded with the raw material, unencumbered with the coast of transportation to Northern cities, Southern manufacturers should not only compete, but successfully maintain a higher position than those so far removed from the cotton-growing region. But so it is with few exceptions, our own Graniteville being among them.

The industrial condition, or lack of industry, in the South was also graphically illustrated in a paragraph that followed taken from a speech by a Southern orator, delivered before the "Southern Commercial Convention" at New Orleans, that same year :

It is time that we should look about us, and see in what relation we stand to the North. From the rattle with which the nurse tickles the ear of the child born in the South, to the shroud that covers the cold form of the dead, everything comes to us from the North. We rise from between sheets made in Northern looms, and pillows of Northern feathers, to wash in basins made in the North, dry our beards in Northern towels, and dress ourselves in garments woven in Northern looms; we eat from Northern plates and dishes; our rooms are swept with Northern brooms, our gardens dug with Northern spades, and our bread kneaded in dishes of Northern wood or tin; and the very wood which feeds our fires is cut with Northern axes, helved with hickory brought from Connecticut and New York.

The remedy for this state of affairs was the proposal of a resolution, recommending the State Legislatures to encourage a direct trade with Europe by exempting from taxation all goods imported, or by allowing the importers an equivalent drawback or bounty.

In another chapter on South Carolina, the following is quoted from a message of Governor Seabrook, to the State Legislature, about that time :



IT REMAINED FOR THE BIG COTTON-MILLS TO SOLVE THE EDUCATIONAL PROBLEM

Class of Proximity Mills School Children on parade. In the annual parade of all the school children in the county, including those of the State Normal School, numbering eight thousand children, the hitherto despised cotton-mill children of the Proximity Mills, carried off first prize.

Education has been provided by the Legislature for one class of the citizens of the State, which is the wealthy class. For the middle and poorer classes of society, it has done nothing, since no organized system has been adopted for that purpose. You have appropriated seventy-five thousand dollars annually to free schools; but, under the present mode of applying it, that liberality is really the profusion of the prodigal, rather than the judicious generosity which confers real benefit. The few who are educated at public expense in those excellent and truly useful institutions, the Arsenal and Citadel Academies, (military schools) form almost the only exception to the truth of this remark. Ten years ago, twenty thousand adults, besides children, were unable to read or write in South Carolina. Has our free school system dispelled any of this ignorance? Are there not any reasonable fears to be entertained that the number has increased since that time?

In a message of Gov. Adams, December 1855, urging the appointment of a State Superintendent of Education, he said,

Make at least, this effort, and if it results in nothing—if in consequence of insurmountable difficulties in our condition, no improvement can be made on the present system, and the poor of the land are hopelessly doomed to ignorance, poverty and crime—you will, at least, feel conscious of having done your duty, and public anxiety on the subject will be quieted.

These problems of education were to be solved long before the civil war, and while legislators, orators, and a few writers were trying to solve them, there were agitators in the North, then, just as they are now, who without any fundamental notion to assist in relieving the conditions by real help, or through the slow evolution of progress, by industry and the aid of money, they aimed to cure them by lopping off heads that didn't concern them or of which they had little understanding at all. And of course, the result was that bitter animosity which brought on that great civil conflict of brother against brother, as shown by the following extract, also from Olmstead's book:

How little complaint is made of this impertinence of these Northern Societies! Why are not their agents sent back in tar and feathers, to take care of their own vicious and wretched poor?

When the conflict was on, the most active in these societies usually remained at home to continue their ranting and talking while others went forth to do the fighting. And then when the conflict was over, what was done to relieve these "vicious and wretched" poor who were worse off, if anything, than ever before?

Millions were expended and squandered to uplift and educate the freed negro, whose problem the South had already faced, and would have been quite able to take care of, if only left alone, but as to the poor whites,—not a dollar was expended on them. While the negroes were taken from the cotton-fields, where they were needed, and turned into politicians, lawyers and orators, the poor whites were left to starve and die by countless hundreds. It remained for the big men of the South to solve their problem, and this they did when it confronted them, at the big mills of the Piedmont, around Greenville, and the Pelzer Mills, and further along, down in Anderson County and Georgia and Alabama. When into their newly created and unorganized villages they gathered the destitute people from the backwoods, swamps, plantations and foothills, by the thousands, they found themselves facing problems which could not be dismissed by mere academic discussions. There were millions of dollars invested, and millions of dollars' worth of Yankee machinery to be paid for, besides the grim reality of saving thousands of human lives.

The comparison may seem a brutal one, but the farmer knows that he cannot turn the soil and raise crops with lean half-starved cattle, and he knows, too, that he cannot feed the grain to such cattle in unstinted quantities. The big mill men of brains, in buckling down to the solution of their problems, saw them in this light. They saw that they must set to work to raise the poor, decadent, half-fed, and in many instances, diseased humanity, suddenly thrown upon them, not only to some degree of efficiency, but they must teach them how to live and take care of themselves.

It must have seemed a discouraging task, but the big men went at it in a business-like way. They first found out wherein lay the trouble and then they compounded the cure. Thus was conceived that welfare work which stands forth today as a monument for admiration, and over which the muck-rakers, agitators and professional reformers, endeavor to throw a shroud. When no longer able to do this, they declare it a mere delusion to beguile the mill-workers into the belief that they are being benefited, and to tempt them into working for less wages.

The fact is, the inception of this welfare work came as a matter of self preservation on the part of the mill-owners. The people gathered together in the big mill communities were so densely ignorant, and in many instances had sunk to such a low state of degradation, that they were scarcely more than children without the virtues of the ordinary child. Not only was it found necessary to provide medical attendance for them, and supervise their food, but in some instances it was found essential to put them under police surveillance as well. Since the vast majority had no knowledge of personal cleanliness, hygiene or sanitary safeguards, it was necessary also to establish regular inspections of their houses and yards, and insist upon their keeping them clean.

It is related that one of the mill-presidents, in his thoughtlessness respecting the habits of these people, provided his mill-houses with bath-tubs. The families upon moving into these houses, having never heard of such a thing as a bath or a bath-tub, at once utilized the tubs as receptacles for their wood and coal and rations, to the great chagrin and disappointment of the mill-president. Was it to be wondered at then, that the "King of Pelzer" found it necessary to dictate to them the length their stove-pipes should be inserted in their chimneys?

To teach such people how to live, and take care of themselves, women welfare workers were brought in from the North, from the South and from the West. Ministers, Sun-

day School teachers and preachers were also paid by the mills in many instances, from their depleted coffers; for the saving of human lives just then, was more important than trying to spin cotton and pay mortgages on Yankee machinery. Churches and school-houses had to be built, and classes in sewing, cooking, raffia work and domestic science established and housed. Kindergarten classes followed for the little ones, and hospitals for the aged and infirm, where never before were



THE ONE HIGHLY PRIZED AND MUCH CHERISHED CREATURE
THE FAMILY COW

such institutions heard of. Thus was conceived and developed the welfare work, which has been declared by our progressives and socialistic agitators and reformers, to be a humbug—arranged merely to tempt the people from the farms and beguile them into working for low wages. As a matter of fact neither a church or a school-house, nor a bath-tub or a swimming pool, could ever have tempted one of these people, for they had never had any use for these things, and were generally as afraid of water as is a cat.

Though these people were represented as coming from

farms, where they were supposed to be farmers, it was found that they did not know enough to plant a garden, even when there was every facility for planting one. In order to get them to raise a few vegetables for their own consumption, they were provided with seeds, and instructions were given them in gardening, and prizes offered for the best results. Pasturage was furnished for that one highly prized, and much-cherished creature, which some few of them possessed, chiefly those coming from the hills and mountains, and which in many instances had been the children's very salvation, the family cow.¹

Flowers were planted around some of the mills to make them look more attractive, and parks began to be laid out and developed. Occupations were found in many instances for the poor old fathers, who could not be of any service in the mills, as gardeners, and some of them developed into landscape architects of merit. One of these I remember meeting at one of the Chadwick-Hoskins Mills near Charlotte, where he took great pride in showing me the park he had laid out around that mill.

Kiosks and brass bands followed the parks, some of the mills paying a musical instructor a hundred dollars or more a month to teach their mill boys to blow a horn and beat a drum. Playgrounds were established for the little ones and for the big ones, and for the spinners and the doffers, who never played before.

It is related that one of the mill-superintendents, on passing one of these playgrounds late one moonlight night, observed a dark form climbing up the newly-erected toboggan-slide. At the top, the form hesitated. Slowly seating itself, down the slide it shot into the heap of sand below. Then out of the

¹ As an example of how highly the cow is often prized by the hill people is a story told me of an old fellow who upon paying his tax, complained at the valuation put on his cow. The tax assessor explained to him that all cows were assessed at a valuation of ten dollars. He insisted, however, that his cow was worth more; that he wouldn't take twenty dollars for her, and he wasn't going to have his cow valued at any less, and so his cow was assessed at twenty dollars on which he cheerfully paid the tax.

sand it rose, and haltingly moved around, and climbed the slide again, and again it shot down into the sand.

The Superintendent's curiosity aroused, he walked over to the slide to see who it was thus amusing himself at that late hour. Peering down into an upturned face grinning in the moonlight, he recognized a little old fellow upward of sixty years old. The grin on the face faded, as recognizing the Superintendent, the old fellow said,

"I never played none when I war a kid, an' I war jes' seein' how the thing wourked. But my! Them kids hev a good time now-a-days. I didn't useter have none."

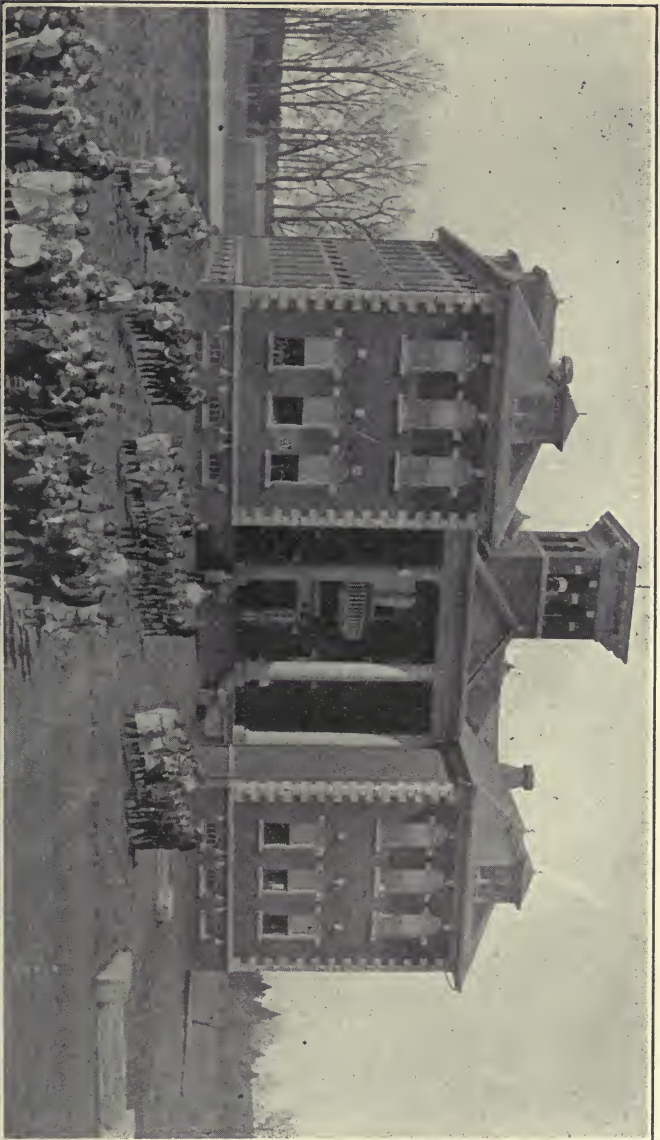
Thus the welfare work, which, from the matter of self protection in its inception, grew and developed. It grew and developed and spread, passing on to the older mills, and to other smaller ones, some of which had been in operation before the war, and had not discovered the need of welfare work at all. At the mills where the work was started, such beneficent results accrued that the very reason of its inception was forgotten. Under the eyes of the big men who created it, it became a work of masterly rivalry and pride, and thousands upon thousands of dollars were expended in its development and upkeep. Graded school-buildings were erected where the State had been unable to provide even a school-house of its own, and competent teachers were brought in and paid by the mills themselves. Handsome club houses, church buildings and hospitals were put up, the most expensive of them costing twenty-five thousand dollars, while dozens of others cost the corporations upwards of eighteen thousand dollars each. It was estimated at the time of our investigation, that in South Carolina alone there were fifty such buildings put up by the cotton-mills, at a cost of from five to ten thousand dollars each, while the number of welfare workers, school-teachers and ministers, with salaries ranging from five hundred to a thousand dollars, paid entirely by the mills, was great.

Down into Georgia and Alabama the work spread, or grew up as the case might be. In distant Mississippi, where there

appears to have been a mill at Stonewall, as far back as the early seventies, struggling along with the labor problem by itself, its management was turned over to a practical young man by the name of Wainwright. An interesting episode showing how this new manager was confronted with the labor problem was reported by one of our agents on the child-labor investigation. The new manager had seen two white girls, barefooted and bare-legged, with their skirts girded above their knees, working in a field chopping down cotton stalks for a negro and former slave, known as John Africa. The negro was born in Africa of "savage" parents, one of them said to have been a chief.

Mr. Wainwright believed that if any could be induced to take a job in the cotton-mill, it would be these two girls working in the field for a negro and an ex-slave born of savage parents. He went to them with an offer of employment. He explained how the work in the mill was much lighter than the field work, and that they could earn a great deal more, besides having work every day without being subjected to the hot sun or rain. But his offer of employment and bettered conditions was scorned. In this case the girls preferred doing field work for a negro to working in a factory. Imagine then the class of girls that Mr. Wainwright got to go into his mill. He got them nevertheless, and to-day his mill community stands forth, not only as a model community, but as healthy and robust a one as may be found anywhere. No loafers or idlers are allowed in it. It has no dives or disreputable houses, corners or saloons; and any person not behaving himself is promptly "run off," to use the language of a weaver I met in Alabama, who said his only objection to Stonewall was that Mr. Wainwright required his mill-hands to attend Sunday School and behave themselves.

As the welfare work spread up from Mississippi, and down from South Carolina, and off into the old North State, the rivalry between the mills in carrying on this work became so keen in many instances. that some of the mill-men diverged



SCHOOL HOUSE WITH ITS EQUIPMENT COSTING TWENTY-FIVE THOUSAND DOLLARS

Built and maintained by one of the cotton-mills at Greensboro, N. C., for the education of the mill children. In the annual competitive parade of all the school children in the county, it was the children from this school that carried off first prize.

from the beaten track, and carried out ideas that may not come under the head of welfare work at all. The Poe Mills near Greenville built an ice factory and delivered a cake of ice every morning regularly to each of its families, making no charge for it. The Cones at Greensboro, North Carolina, devoted their efforts to enlarged school facilities, building a school-house with its equipment, costing twenty-five thousand dollars, and maintaining it, and giving their employees an annual fourth of July picnic, at a cost of three or four thousand dollars.

The Pattersons, building their mills near the Atlantic Coast in a section of country reputed to be the unhealthiest in the State, devoted their time, money and efforts to making it one of the healthiest. Artesian wells were bored, old wells covered up, and water from the new wells was required to come up to a standard chemical analysis. Each of the mill-houses was furnished with electric lights and each mill-family with free medical attendance, and finally, in their biggest and newest mill, an improved method was adopted, by which its "moist, lint-laden atmosphere," which the labor committees tell about, could be completely renovated every half hour.

One big mill-man in North Carolina, known generally as Will Erwin, went down into the dark corner of Harnett County, where the people were so poor that one old man was found ploughing with his sons dragging the plough. With the money of the Dukes, I believe, this mill-man strung barbed-wire fence around that particular dark corner, and with his cotton-mill in the middle, he built a village, and devoted his attention to lifting the children of the poor whom he employed, out of their ignorance, by giving them a graded school, which a personal inspection of several hours satisfied me was a better conducted school than the one attended by my own children and the President's son in the city of Washington.

Nor was this all. There at Duke was built a village. Law and order, prosperity and education developed, and a civilization was created, surpassing that of a little mill-town I

am familiar with, right in New England, where to-day, with all our child-labor and truancy laws in effect, conditions are deplorable.

In another dark corner in Davie County, this same Mr. Erwin and the Dukes built another mill and mill-village, and did practically the same thing as they did in Harnett County, while their big mill at Durham, established under different conditions, gives employment to hundreds of other people.

Though it may not be denied that all this has been done to pay stockholders their dividends, shall we deny the good it has effected, and the dividends it has paid humanity? For my part I can conceive of no greater charity than that of giving work to the unemployed, and to those who most need it.

We may skip from North Carolina down into Georgia. At Columbus, where Mr. Olmstead in his book referred to the poverty and misery of the "Cracker girls" in the mills, let us see what that other big man, G. Gunby Jordan, has done for those "Cracker girls." I asked an old Georgian war-veteran what had become of them, and he smiled.

"We haven't any more," he said.

But it was related that Dr. Stiles had found ten of them in Mr. Jordan's big mill. He called them "suspects," and diagnosed their ailment as hook-worm disease and clay eating. Out of the hundreds of toilers in that big mill, these ten "Cracker girls" suffering disease were proved to be recent arrivals from the "farms."

Photographs of that mill's "Child-garden," that transforms the children of these Cracker girls into healthy men and women, tell its own story. Yet a professional social worker said to me deprecatingly, on having her attention called to these facts,

"Oh, well, the mill-men know that a child with a kindergarten training makes a more efficient worker."

And I found these more efficient workers going from the spinning-frames to the counting rooms, and from the counting rooms to the banks and offices. Some of them were stenog-

raphers; some of them were bookkeepers, and secretaries. And I found them on the railroads, as ticket agents and train dispatchers, and the Secretary of a big Board of Trade in a Southern city, said to me,

“Why, I worked in a cotton-mill myself.”

As an example of how the truth is suppressed, one of the brightest, shrewdest and fairest agents on the child-labor investigation was assigned to study this welfare work at the



HOOK-WORM SUSPECTS SUCH AS DR. STILES FOUND

Reproduced from one of the National Child Labor Committee's publications in which such types are represented as products of the mill.

mills, by the Bureau of Labor, and only meager extracts of her findings were ever published. When I was with her at the Pelzer Mills, she was most enthusiastic over the great work accomplished for the poverty-stricken families drawn from that sterile country in South Carolina, around what is Graniteville to-day, where way back in the forties a Mr. Gregg conceived the idea of building an industry for the poor afflicted people, and giving them employment. His project met with opposition; it was ridiculed and scoffed at, but he wrote, and



A TRUE PRODUCT OF THE COTTON-MILL

She is a spinner at the Graniteville Mills. Note her robust form, strong limbs and bright and smiling countenance. The cotton-mill has done for her and her generation what it has done for hundreds of others from the poor farms of the sterile sections.

preached, and kept steadily at his purpose, until to-day the mill community at Graniteville, with its hundreds of steady, healthy, industrious mill-workers, stands forth as a veritable monument to the man who conceived it, worked for it and accomplished it.

Yet the young woman who was assigned to study this work at the Graniteville Mills, and at the other mills, was never allowed to write her report, or if written, it never appeared. After fully seven months spent in the field, learning the things which I have partially set forth in this chapter, she was sent off to various libraries throughout the country, to draw a per diem of three dollars in addition to her salary and expenses, to write a history of child labor from books, which is work not in the nature of an investigation at all.

Thousands of dollars were expended by the Bureau of Labor in trying to prove that the welfare work at the cotton-mills was carried on to cheapen labor, but the result obtained showed that the wages paid the operatives were higher in mills doing welfare work than in those doing none. Scarcely five pages of the Commissioner's nineteen volume report were devoted to welfare work, the statement being made that "it would go too far afield to describe all the welfare work done." Yet thousands of dollars were expended in trying to find little children being "murdered at the mills," and when these could not be found, agents were sent to public libraries to find them in books.

CHAPTER XXXII.

GOOD AND BAD MILLS AND THEIR WORK.

WHEN I learned what the cotton textile industry had done, and was still doing for thousands of our people—not Russians, Poles, Slavs or Hungarians, but people of Celtic and Anglo-Saxon stock, of the same strain as those who landed upon the bleak New England coasts in the early history of our country—I sought of my own volition those mills which were not contributing their share in the great work of human progress and development by at least helping the poor to help themselves.

“Where are those mills?” was the question I asked.

“Go to Selma, Alabama,” said one man to me, and when I got there I found both of its mills were bankrupt and no longer running.

Then I was directed to another place in the same State, where I found a small mill, disorderly, stuffy and dirty. There were sickly-looking boys and girls shuffling around in it. One girl in particular attracted my attention, for she was sliding herself along on the edge of a bobbin-box as she attended to her spinning-frame. The mill appeared to be without any supervision, and when I asked for the superintendent, he was nowhere to be found.

A talk with two or three of the operatives hanging around the store outside, convinced me that they were some of the riff-raff that other mills wouldn't have around. One young fellow about five feet two in height, said he had been “run off” from one mill for slashing a negro with a knife. A few days later on picking up a newspaper in Birmingham, I read that

this mill had gone into the hands of a receiver. The natural law of economics had put it out of business. None other was required.

At another place in North Carolina, where I heard mill conditions were very bad, I found an old, dilapidated building. The hum of its machinery was silenced, its gate closed, and its village houses were wretched-looking, window-broken and tenantless.

A practical mill-man said to me in another part of the State, "They have got the darndest looking set of people in that mill," naming the mill, "I ever did see. They get them out of the woods somewhere in Moore County. I don't know what is the matter with them, but you ought to see them."

So I went to the mill mentioned, and found at the head of its management a typical old farmer and landlord of that section of the country, with a mouth so full of tobacco juice it was oozing out of the corners. He was corpulent, good natured, and frankly discussed conditions with me.

"I never know'd nuthin' 'bout cotton-mills," said he, "till I tuk hole o' this un. Fact, I never hed no use fer none when they began puttin' 'em up, but they hev done a heap o' good fer the poah folks aroun'. I didn't know the folks were so dreadful poah 'till I tuk hole 'er this mill. I got a family hyar now thet was on my lan', an' I hed know'd 'em all my life, but I didn't know they were so near perishin'. I got 'em ter come hyar, an' we hed ter take their rations away from 'em, they came so near killin' 'emselves eatin'.

"You oughter go up an' see the Woodys, at High Falls, an' see what they hev done," he continued. "Thet was the worse hole in the county. They made whiskey up ther' an' moonshined, an' fit among 'emselves, an' killed each other every little while. It was an awful place. The Woodys ar' an ole Quaker family; an' they went up ther' twelve or fourteen years ago an' put up a mill. Everybody said et was no place fer a mill, an' thet the moonshiners would run them Woodys out, but they went up ther', an' now they hev one o' the nicest

settlements ter be found anywhere. Some of the old moon-shiners hev jined the church an' hev money in the bank, an' ther's a school-house, an' all the chil'ren go ter school. Yer ougter go up ther' an' see what they hev done."

The mill was away from the railroad, and I did not have time to go, but I went into the old fellow's mill to see his "queer looking set of people, from the backwoods of Moore County." Passing the weave room, I saw a woman with her



TYPE OF HOUSE IN THE COTTON BELT

Occupied by better class of tenants who cultivate the land for half the crop

head in a white sunbonnet, sitting on a box watching her looms. Going up to the spinning-room I found the windows were all wide open. As I passed along looking for the superintendent, I saw long, lanky, clay-faced, squint-eyed girls, standing around the frames. In a bobbin-box were two, crowded down, facing each other with stupid, expressionless faces. As I approached the superintendent's office, grouped in a corner were ten or a dozen boys, short-legged and long-legged ones, stooped-shouldered and gawky-looking.

The superintendent, a good-natured, careless Southerner,

who had been reared in a cotton-mill himself, in returning with me through the spinning-room, nearly stumbled over a girl coiled up on the floor by the side of her frame, fast asleep. In a bobbin-box nearby was another one asleep. As the one on the floor sleepily drew herself up, the superintendent, looking at me, smiled. In reply to my unquestionable look of amazement, he said,

"We treat our people all right, we do." And indicating the spinning, he added, "the work is running all right, isn't it?"

Calling his attention to the open windows, I asked him how it was he could run with them open when it was alleged that it was necessary to keep them closed, thus confining the spinners in the "close, lint-laden atmosphere."

"That's all nonsense," he replied, "I can run my work just as well with the windows open as with them closed, and I keep them open in warm weather."

Referring to the boys in the corner, I asked him if he allowed them outside the mill to play between doffs.

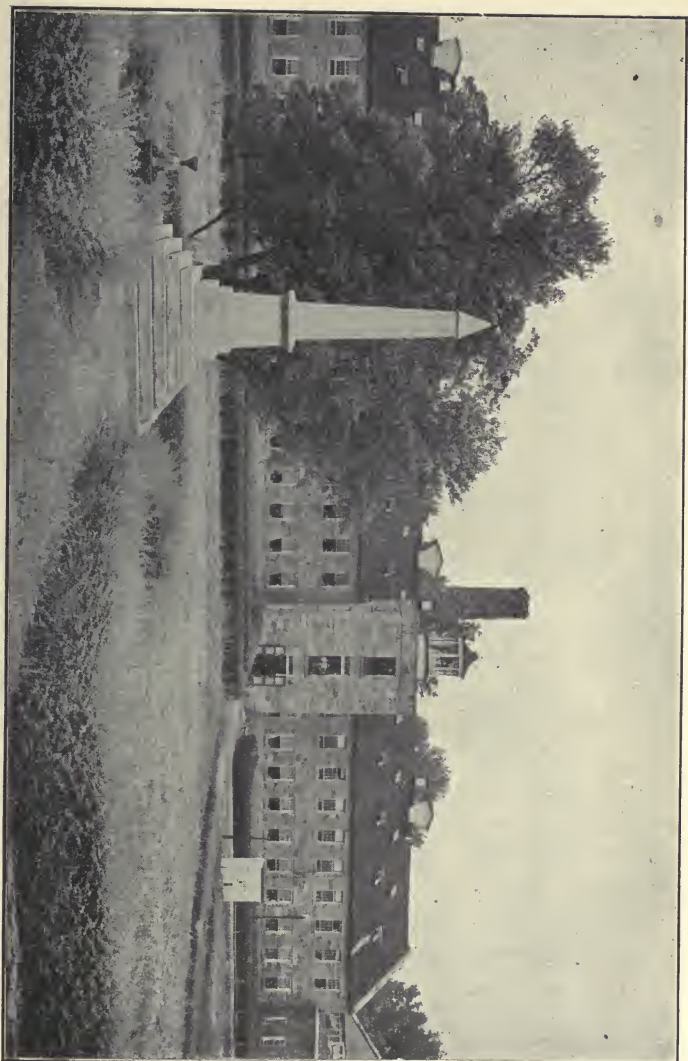
"Them boys don't know enough to play," said he, "and if I let them outside the mill, I can't get them back when I want them, so I have to keep them in here."

He said further that he had commenced working in a mill when he was nine years old, and had had a Yankee boss, who made him hustle. As we discussed conditions he told me of the frightful state in which some of the people came to the mill. I find among my notes the story of one family, literally full of worms, and a boy with something the matter with his legs. They were crooked and he could hardly walk. The family was treated, and the boy's ailment cured, so that they were all doing fairly well.

There is another story among my notes, of the Garner family, coming out of the woods bare-footed, uncouth and ragged, and Maggie exclaiming, upon seeing the mill-houses for the first time,

"Why, they hev glass winders to 'em!"

And the night after their arrival, they were seen sitting



THE GRANITEVILLE MILL. ONE OF THE OLDEST MILLS IN THE SOUTH

The monument in the foreground is erected to the memory of William Gregg who founded the mill in 1845, and who, in the midst of a scantily productive wilderness, created a blooming oasis of industry and progress. Note, the mill windows are all open.

around the fire, putting goose-grease on their feet and legs, talking vulgarly, showing not the least modesty, and all unconscious of anything improper or wrong. Within six months after being at the mill, Maggie would not have been recognized as the same person as the one, who coming in from the woods, bare-footed and bare-legged, exclaimed as she saw the houses, "Why, they hev glass winders to 'em!"

At Walhalla, in the north-western corner of South Carolina, is a little mill that I had been anxious to visit for a long time. I first heard of it at Pelzer, where there were a number of families reported as coming from there, and on my mountain work I had obtained reports of many going there from Jackson and Macon Counties, North Carolina. One of my assistants had reported one of these as "conditions not improved at the mill," because the father had been sent to the chaingang for killing the policeman. He might, however, have killed a man or two before going to the mill, and have escaped punishment.

At one time in Jackson County, I found myself in the Blue Ridge, within thirty miles of Walhalla, but I was deterred from continuing my journey through that part of South Carolina by a Hill Billy, who said there were no houses to speak of on the entire road, and the soil covering the ground "warn't no thicker than a rabbit's hide."

I finally arrived at Walhalla on a hot summer's day, after an experience in a railroad wreck in Georgia, a tramp of four miles along the railroad track, and finally a long drive from Seneca, through a dry, arid country, in which several women in sunbonnets were working in the fields. I found Walhalla a pleasant little village that was originally the settlement of some German colonists. It is related that these Germans on the breaking out of the civil war, joined in the strife, to a man; and few of them, if any, ever returned. Many of the houses still bear evidences of their thrift and love of flowers and growing things. The place is honored by being the residence of Col. Thompson, the sole survivor I believe, of the

Commission that signed the decree of the State's secession from the Union, which brought on the war. I spent a pleasant hour with the old gentleman, whom I found to possess a vigorous and active mind.

At the cotton-mill, the principal turned me over to his Superintendent, with instructions to show me around. As we went through the mill together, we could easily pick out the new arrivals from the country beyond the town. Designating a big, stupid-looking girl, the Superintendent said,

"She has only been here about a week, and she don't do anything but stand around. I don't believe she is going to amount to anything."

The windows of the mill were all open, and the atmosphere appeared to me remarkably cool. My attention being attracted to water running off the roof, the superintendent explained that it was pumped on to the roof and allowed to run down each side of the mill for the purpose of producing enough moisture in the mill to keep the work running well. This presented another example of the "close, confining, lint-laden atmosphere of the cotton-mill, being constantly moistened by vaporizers," to the great detriment of the children working therein, as represented by the special interests.

As we finally went from the spinning-room to the cloth room, where the girls were employed who had been in the mills a long time, their improved appearance was most marked. They were neatly dressed with hair well arranged, and in general appearance and intelligence they would compare favorably with girls found in any of our city high schools without their frills and silliness. I may say right here, that I believe a hundred mill-girls taken from any of the mills in the South, where they have been reared, and subjected to a physical examination with a hundred girls taken from one of our New York or Washington high schools, they would be found to measure more and weigh more, and to be in a better physical condition than the high school girls. But while the young people improve at the mills it is not so on the farms.

Upon returning to the mill-office, the Superintendent, who appeared to be a new man, referred to the big, stupid-looking girl, whom he had indicated to me as standing around, doing nothing, reiterating his opinion to the President that she would not amount to anything.

"Never mind her," replied the President, "she'll come around all right. I have known them to stand around in the mill for a week or two, doing nothing more than watch the belts go round, and they have made good hands."

This mill in effect proved to be a sort of recruiting station, where the young people from the farms, after learning the work required of them, went to other mills farther east or south, where the pay was more. The State Commissioner of Commerce and Labor told me that it reported a larger number of children from time to time, working between the ages of twelve and fourteen, than any other mill in the State. Still the number of children I saw at work were not more than half a dozen in all.

In the adjoining county of Pickens, the famous or infamous mountain outlaw, Redmond, held forth a dozen or twenty years ago. Incidents of his bold exploits, his murders and raids, and his final capture, which required all the machinery of the counties around, and a part of that of the State, to effect, form the theme of many a local story-teller. The South indeed presents a rich field for story and romance, which never has been exploited. In fact we have little or no literature from the South worthy the name. About all we have, with few exceptions, is purely ideal or imaginary, giving no idea in truth, of its great masses of people, and the conditions under which they have been born and bred.

The conditions that bred such men as Redmond no longer exist in Pickens. Its county-seat has more than sixteen thousand spindles, child educators, and four hundred and thirty-two looms, giving them an opportunity to make a good living just as soon as they are old enough and trained. This machinery has doubled the population in each of the last two decades.

Then there is Easley with its eighty thousand spindles and two thousand looms; Calhoun and Central, with their twenty-five thousand spindles each, and Liberty, with another eleven thousand, with a total of fifteen hundred looms, making in all nearly one hundred and sixty thousand spindles, and four thousand looms, where formerly hundreds of poor had no visible means of support, and the entire machinery of the



FIVE LITTLE SISTERS ON THE FARM

Note the fat and healthy appearance of the youngest one, the gradual deterioration of the others and finally the aged appearance of the mother at thirty-five.

county was employed in putting down outlawry, suppressing crime and punishing criminals.

Just over the border of the State, in Rutherford County, North Carolina, is a group of mills that is seldom visited by anyone, being in a most inaccessible part of the country. On my way to visit these mills, I found myself fairly dumped off the train in darkness at no place at all, without bag or baggage. A man with a lantern directing me to his surrey, said he would carry me to Caroleen, one of the mill-towns. On our way there through lonely woods and dark fields, he said in

reply to my comment on the wild and lonesome aspect of the country, that it was nothing to what it used to be before the mills went up.

"I tell you, it was a rough country then, with the Gooch boys the principal men in it. Though they had to be killed to get shed of them, they warn't so bad at heart. I had one of them shoe my horse once, and he was just as polite and nice as any man you would want to meet, but let one of them boys get mad with you, and you might as well get out of the country, as fast as you could go, or he would get you sure. One of them went down into South Caroliny with a winchester, after his wife had quit him and had gone to work in a cotton-mill. He tried to shoot her in the mill, but was shot in the head and killed.

"Another one of them broke a jug of whiskey over the head of the Sheriff who came up from South Caroliny, thinking to arrest him. It was night, and the Sheriff thought he had him dead to rights, but that Gooch boy went for him with the jug half full of brandy, the only weapon he had. He did the Sheriff up, and got away, but was so badly cut up himself that he was found dead the next day in a corn-field, about a mile away.

"I tell you, it was a rough country then, full of blockading, fighting and killing, but it ain't so now. The mills seem to have changed all that."

He landed me in a little inn where I got a comfortable room, and a good breakfast the following morning. At the mill I counted sixteen boys playing with tops. I asked them why they were not working, and one replied with a grin,

"Thar ain't nobody to make us work."

Later, there were four of them still playing. The others had gone into the mill. Those remaining said they had not gone into the mill because they were not needed just then. They said they were paid sixty-five cents a day, and were required to work only about one-third of the time.

I engaged an old fellow to drive me to the other two mills, Henrietta and Cliffside, respectively. The Caroleen and Henrietta mills, with a total of seventy-five thousand spindles, and eighteen hundred and forty-seven looms, were capitalized at one million and a half dollars, with a president and treasurer managing them, as democratic in his daily life and appearance as his most humble workman. He mingled with them and talked with them, and was as one of them, eating their food, and dressing no better or worse than any of them. His own boy he put to work in one of the mills when he was small, and he is now attending Harvard College.

On my way to the Cliffside mills, the old fellow driving the team told me how he came into the country thirty-one years before, a poor, ignorant young man twenty-one years old. He went to work for a man cutting timber at ten dollars a month. There were few people in the country then, and the few that were there raised hardly enough to eat.

" 'Why,' said he, 'I kin count fifty families who did not make their bread and meat.'"

"They must have had enough to eat," said I, "or they could not have lived."

"They managed to live, but they did not hev enough. They were so dreadful poah, they did not hev clothes enough, an' sometimes did not git corn enough to carry them through. You hev no idee about it. Thar war no market fer nuthin', an' the onlyest money crop war the little cotton, some few of the better farmers raised, an' they hed ter haul et seventeen miles to Shelby, an' haul back guano to put on the land ter make et grow."

He told how with his own meager savings he had bought some land at five dollars and thirty-five cents an acre, and some of that he had since cut up into building lots, and had realized on it an aggregate of eight hundred dollars an acre. Such land as he had originally bought for five dollars, could not be bought now for thirty dollars, he said.

As we looked down upon Cliffside with its church, school-

house and long street with trim cottages and young shade trees, he exclaimed,

"No one would ever believe thet this war the hole it war once. Old man Haynes with his mill has changed all of et. No more moonshining hyar, and everybody goes ter church an' Sunday School. The ole man runs off anybody thet misbehaves 'iself, I tell yer.

"I kin remember when he an' his brother went down into South Caroliny with a bull and a mule, an' put in a crop o' cotton. They come back with one hundred and twnty-five dollars in money—every cent they hed in the world. They put that money in a store an' supplied the folks for miles around with the stuff they hed ter hev, takin' mortgages on whatever they could get. They put up the mill about ten years ago, an' now look at et."

And I did look at it. Old Mr. Haynes exhibited such a degree of agitation at the mention of child labor and its misrepresentation by the organizations, newspapers and magazines that he could scarcely talk. I went all through his forty thousand spindle mill with its fifteen hundred looms, from top to bottom before finding him, and a more robust and healthier set of men and women-workmen, I never have seen anywhere.

I asked the Superintendent where he had learned the mill-business, and he replied that he had hired out to Major Schenk, at Lawndale in Cleveland County, in 1887 as a boy, and worked his way up. The old Major before that owned the only iron safe in the country for miles around, and the farmers used to bring their money to him to keep in it. One day he counted up and found he had ten thousand dollars in that safe. He called in the farmers and told them if they would trust him, he would give them eight per cent for their money and put up a cotton-mill. They agreed, and the Major paid the eight per cent., educated hundreds of children, and made money for himself and the Yankee mill-men besides. Cleveland County now has fifty-five thousand spindles, educating children to



TYPICAL GROUP OF DOFFER BOYS AND THEIR SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHER

The larger boys in the background work in the card room. The youngsters in the foreground doff, and their work is intermittent, they being allowed to play or do what they please two-thirds of the working day. No children, however, are allowed in the mill until they are twelve years old.

work, or at least they were before the panic which caused many of the mills to close down, or run on half-time.

I was interested in mill conditions at Rome, Georgia, particularly because so many of the decadent people from the mountains of Western North Carolina, mentioned in my first investigations, had returned from there as unfit, the complaint of some of them being that "the work was too steady."

Just outside the corporate limits of Rome, the Secretary and Treasurer of the Anchor Mills showed me around with pride at the work his mill had accomplished there, within the comparatively short period of nine years. In the beginning, not only was the enterprise handicapped for the lack of capital, but public opinion was decidedly against it, one of the chief objections raised being the undesirable class of people drawn to factories.

The factory went up, and with it a school-house as a part of its equipment. The teachers' salaries, and everything required for a well-directed school, were paid for by the corporation. The mill-children were given an eight months' school, and were required to pass the fourth grade before they were allowed to work in the mill. And now, after the corporation had built up a model community, the city of Rome wanted to take the mill, with its once despised mill-children, within the corporate limits.

In taking me up to his spinning room we passed through a fenced inclosure, where, pointing to holes in the ground such as boys make in playing marbles, the Secretary said, referring to the doffer boys,

"It is a wonder they are not here now."

At the head of the stairs we walked into a group of boys and girls, as idle as so many school-children during recess hour. The mill-man addressing them, said,

"This man has come to get some of you kids to go back with him to the farm. How many of you want to go?"

Some of the boys shook their heads; others grinned, and the girls looked scared. Several children were up in the tower

They had gone up there of their own accord and were not hidden away, as I have known representations to have been made under similar circumstances. Seated on a bench in the drawing-in room a little girl was pointed out, drawing threads through the reeds for the looms.

"There's Becky Wynn," said the mill-man, "her family consisted of mother, an invalid father and three girls. I advanced between forty and fifty dollars to get them here, and Becky began working at eight years of age, when there was no school in session. Her father had to be sent to an asylum, and he died on the way there. The girls worked out all they owed, and Becky's sisters are now married and comfortably situated. Becky is now thirteen years old, has a fourth-grade education, and is earning ninety cents a day. Can you tell me of any poor girl doing better than that?" And stepping up to Becky, he handed her a pencil, asking her to write her name. She did so in a clear, bold hand.

"Now," said he, "let me tell you what the child-labor law has done. We had one boy whom we had to send out because the law said he was too young to work. He stole five dollars, ran away with a circus, and now he is in a hospital with an incurable disease. Another one loafing around got into bad company and stole too. He was let off the first time, but caught stealing a second time, he was sent to the chain-gang. If we had been allowed to keep those two boys in our mill, and send them to school during the eight months our school is in session, I do not believe either of them would have gotten into the trouble they are in."

I went up to Dalton, where I interviewed a kindly old gentleman, whom they called "Uncle George." Before the war his father was a landlord and slave owner. He had gone to the war as a soldier, and after it was over he came home ragged and bare-footed, and found his family fortunes gone to the winds. He went to work at a dollar a day, and now he owns the cotton-mill.

As he began telling me of the many poor children who had

come to him for work, and who had graduated from his mill as first-class operatives, I asked him how many had gone to the penitentiary. He looked at me amazed, as he replied.

"I never knew of one going to the penitentiary, but I can tell you where they did go. There was one little fellow—I remember him well. He came climbing up into the window one day, and he said, 'Mr. Hamilton, I want a job.'

"I looked down at him, and I said, 'Why, sonny, you are too small.' He was only ten years old, but his mother was a widow with a lot of little children, and very poor. The little fellow began telling me how poor they were, and how much they needed his earnings at home. Now, I didn't want to hire that little fellow, but he pleaded so hard, I told the superintendent to give him a broom, and we would pay him thirty cents a day, I think it was. Well, that was fifteen or twenty years ago. That little fellow went from sweeping to spinning, and from spinning to weaving. He became a loom fixer and finally a boss weaver, and now he is superintendent of the Monticello Mills out in Arkansas. Every time he comes East, he comes to see me, and he says, 'Mr. Hamilton, that job you gave me was the making of me.'

"Then there was little Lily Morris. She slipped into the mill when she was only nine years old. I saw her at the spinning-frames one day, and I told the superintendent to send her home, that I did not want such a little girl working here. My superintendent walked over to her, and then he came back and said, 'Mr. Hamilton, if you want to send that girl out' you go and do it yourself.'

"So I went over, and I said, 'Little girl, I don't want you working here,' and she looked up into my face, and said, 'Ain't I doing my work all right?'

"I told her it appeared to be running all right, but that she was too small to work.

"'Ain't I runnin' jes' as many sides, an' keepin' my work up jes' as well as that big girl over there?' she asked.

"She was 'tending four sides, and as they were running all

right, I said 'yes, but you are too small.' And then she burst out in tears, and commenced to cry, so I didn't have no heart to turn her away. Her mother was a widow too, with a lot of children; the oldest one, a boy, was killed by a drunken nigger. Lily is now at the Lindale mills earning fifteen dollars a week.

"Then there was Jim Loner. He was a little fellow too. I didn't want to give him a job, but he hung on so for a job, I just had to give it to him. That was twenty years ago. Now he is boss spinner in the big mills of the Massachusetts Company at Alabama City."

And so on, not only did Mr. Hamilton give me the records of various little ones, whom he had taken into his mill when he thought they were too small to work, but I got enough records at other mills to fill a book. Nearly every mill-superintendent I asked, told me that he had commenced working at eight or nine years of age.

At one little mill in Georgia, run by an old gentleman from Philadelphia, who at one time was American Consul at Panama, I was told of two girls by the name of Kelly. They were begging on the street when Mr. Addamson got them to go into the mill. They improved in the mill, became church members, and finally earning a dollar and a quarter a day each, they left the mill, and with their savings started a little business of their own.

A school-teacher and a social worker was employed at this mill. The social worker told me how she would go to the parents and coax them to let their children go to the school. By this means she had succeeded in getting fifty pupils the first summer they started their school, where there was no compulsory school law to make the children go.

At this same place the hotel-keeper said,

"I have heard a good deal of talk against the cotton-mills, but I have become satisfied that they do a heap of good. When I was town commissioner, we had a lot of families come to us for relief. We couldn't take care of them, but the cot-



THE CHILDS-GARDEN AT COLUMBUS, GA.

Where the education of the mill children begins. This educational work is done at the expense of the cotton-mill which is seen in the background. The children go from the kindergarten to the graded school, and from the graded school to the cotton-mill, and from the cotton-mill, in many instances, to higher walks in life.

ton-mills did take care of them. I knew one family of four generations all living in a two-room house in abject poverty. The girls wouldn't work in families, because that is considered nigger's work. At first they would not go into the mill either, but they got over that, went into the mill, and now they are doing well."

At a million-dollar mill in Alabama, the vice-president, a clean-cut young man, showed me the eighteen-thousand dollar school-house they had built for the children of their operatives, where there is no compulsory school law. Pointing to a map of Georgia, he designated a county, where he said I would find many small farms owned by families, who having come from the mountains of Georgia in poverty, had worked at the cotton-mill long enough to save sufficient money to enable them to return to that county and buy farms.

At the much-written-about mills in and around Huntsville, Alabama, I went in search of the bad conditions, and particularly the mill or mills in which a recent article published in "The Survey" of New York, referred to "many children at work at the spindles and as helpers, ranging anywhere from seven years up, the index finger of more than one little hand missing, lost in the machines, and occasionally a whole hand gone," and "these little children at work twelve hours a day in a great room, the windows of which are kept tightly closed, and the air of which, filled with fine particles of lint, is being constantly moistened by vaporizers."

Of the seven mills in and around Huntsville, I found only one with its windows tightly closed, and that one was a little old mill, the smallest one of them all, which was closed down and not running at all. At the other mills, I looked around for the children with "fingers cut off," and even a "whole hand gone," but I could not find them, neither could I find them working in the mills. In one of the mill-villages, I came to a group of boys playing marbles. I asked the eldest one, twelve years old, why he was not working in the mill.

"They won't let me," he replied.

That seemed to me pretty good evidence that no little children were working "ranging anywhere from seven years up." But I did find a man who said he had been working since he was nine years old. He did not have any fingers cut off. I was informed that he was drawing a salary of ten thousand a year. He was six feet tall, and weighed fully three hundred pounds. He laughingly told me how he had been placed on exhibit at one of the State Legislative Committees, as an example of how working in a cotton-mill stunted one's growth. He was called upon to rise, and as he slowly drew his huge form up, someone was heard to exclaim,

"My God! where would that fellow have grown to if he had not gone to work in a cotton-mill?"

I asked a good lady, who was reported to be drawing a salary of five thousand dollars a year organizing an Association for the education of the poor children of the mountains, if she had seen any little children in the mills at work. I first heard of her at Augusta, where visiting one of the mills the President said to her,

"Walk right into my mill, madam, and see for yourself what is there, and if you see anything wrong or any abuse committed, I shall be glad to have you come out and tell me about it."

When I asked her to name some particular mill at which she had seen little children working, she named High Shoals, North Carolina. Now it happened that I had made a thorough investigation of conditions in that part of North Carolina, and High Shoals was one of the mills at which one of our agents reported the mill-superintendent as hiding the children away. I asked the good lady educator if she had seen the children working.

"I saw them standing around," she said. "I don't know what they were doing."

"But did you see them working?" I insisted.

"No, but the minister told me, and the whistle gave such an unearthly shriek at such an early hour in the morning,

waking everybody up, it seemed a shame. I did not see the children because I had to leave on the early train."

I had driven up to that very mill, arriving in the afternoon. Looking out of my carriage, I saw a group of boys, shouting, running and yelling, in a little grove above the mill. Down at the end of the mill was a playground with a toboggan-slide in it, but no one was playing there. The boys evidently preferred playing in the grove. While I was looking at them, a man appeared in the door of the cotton-mill and blew a whistle. Down went the boys pell-mell into the mill, where their services were required for fifteen or twenty minutes, after which they returned to play again.

The conditions in Gaston County, in which this mill is situated, make a fair presentation of what the cotton-mills have done generally throughout the South, for the people and the Nation at large. Thirty-five years ago there was scarcely a school-house in the county. Outside of the county-seat consisting of the usual court-house and jail, and a few scattered houses around, there was neither a town nor village. The only industry in the county was moonshining. It is estimated that there were at least fifty moonshine stills going at a time, and there were innumerable fights and murders occurring all the time. Poverty and ignorance reigned throughout the land.

With the closing days of the sixties, the rosy hopes which had given everybody work throughout the North who wanted it, began to fade, and the reverses caused by the shutting down of the work-shops, the disorders and riots that followed, soon began to be felt in the South, where cotton fell to four cents a pound, a price which hardly paid for moving it.

With cotton at four cents one of the Gaston County farmers got an idea. He scraped together five hundred dollars, every cent he could raise, and went North looking for the man who could spin his four-cent cotton into yarn. He found him in Rhode Island, a plain, matter-of-fact man, and he said to him in his quaint way,

"Mister, we've got a lot of cotton down in my country, an' if your machinery will spin it, I'll pay fer your machinery. But I don't know nothin' about spinnin' an' I don't know whether your machinery will spin our cotton, but if it does, I'll see that you git yer pay for it."

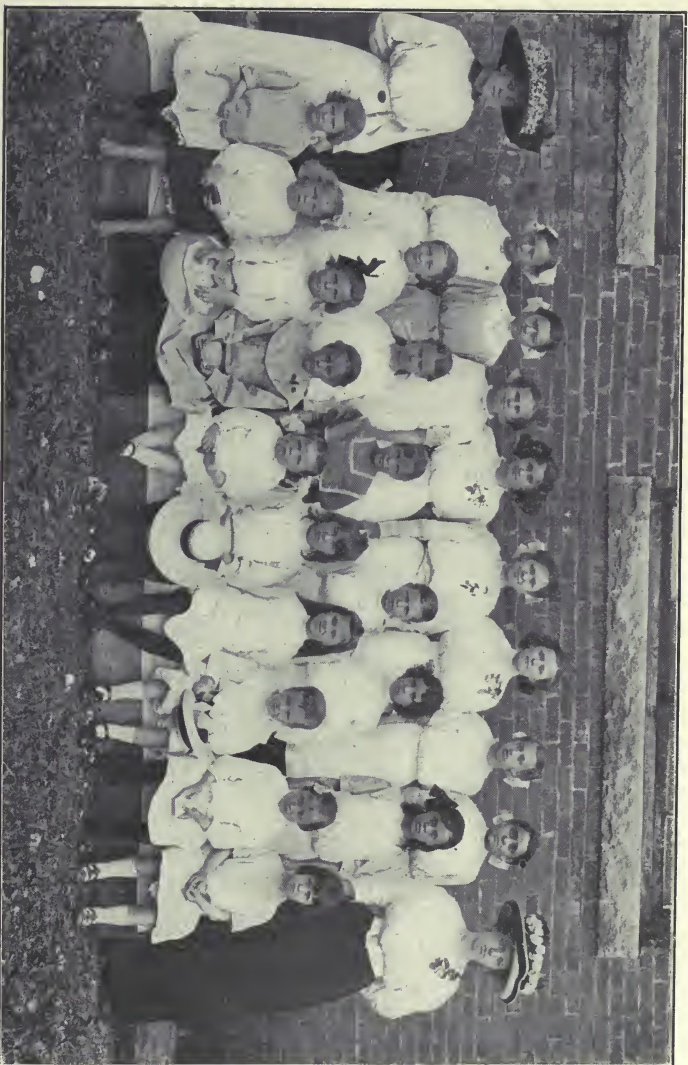
The machine man sizing up his Southern brother, agreed to put up a cotton-mill for him to spin his cotton. A Yankee superintendent was sent down to show him how, and soon within the hitherto silent groves of that corner of Gaston County there went up the busy hum of machinery spinning four-cent cotton into twenty-cent yarn.

But the Yankee reported that the people were too lazy to spin and would not learn. There were fathers who were too lazy to plant a vegetable garden for their own use, and mothers who would burn up their clothing rather than wash it. What could be done with such people as these?

The manufacturer of the machinery thought his investment was a failure, when he began receiving reports of more manufactured product than it was within the capacity of his machinery to turn out. He sent down to investigate. What did he find?

He found that the Gaston County farmer had gathered the children in, and they were spinning night and day, and he found other Gaston County farmers who wanted spinning-mills too. That Yankee machine man did not hesitate to put them up, and more children were gathered in to spin four-cent cotton into twenty-cent yarn. Did those children die?

Go down into Gaston County and see. Open your eyes and look around, and see for yourself what those mills have done since that first Gaston County farmer conceived the idea of spinning four-cent cotton into yarn. You will find him there, known far and wide as "Popsy Rhyne," a quaint old soul, who will tell you all about that first cotton-mill, and how the Yankee machine man said to him, when it was all paid for, that he could have afforded to have given him the machinery for



A SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASS OF MILL CHILDREN AT HUNTSVILLE, ALABAMA

The older girls work in the mill. The younger ones do not. On the so-called farms where there is no work or industry, such girls would be growing up in rags and would be doomed to poverty and ignorance. Besides, if they worked at all, they would be required to do the very hardest kind of manual labor.

nothing, he had sold so much more on the strength of what he had done.

But the children, you say!

Passing one of the mills, I saw the doffers in a grove, lying on their stomachs with their chins in their hands, listening to an older boy, sitting with his back against a tree. At another one of the mills along the road extending up through the county above "Popsy Rhyne's" old mill, I saw another group seated under the mill walls, enjoying the warm spring sunshine. At a third and larger mill, several were playing ball.

But these are thr children of to-day. They have not been murdered yet. Let us hunt up those of yesterday. The first one I came to, upon entering the county, was at Belmont. He was the secretary and treasurer, and a stockholder in two of the mills. He told me that he was born and reared in the county, and that he knew of his own knowledge that the mill-families live at the present time better than the best farmers lived twenty or thirty years ago. He could remember going to school a few months during the year, and nearly freezing in the old school-house, where the children would sit around all huddled up on a cold day, with nothing to do. Now at the mills they have eight months' school in a good, warm building, and a night school for those who are employed during the day.

As an example of child labor, he called in his superintendent, a stout, healthy-looking man, who throwing out his chest, said he had been working in a cotton-mill since he was eight years old, and he had just taken out an insurance policy which had been pronounced a first-class risk. The medical examiner had not found a physical defect in him anywhere.

The next example of child labor was farther on at Gastonia. He was a businesslike man, waiting for a train. One of the town commissioners pointed him out to me, saying,

"I knew that man when he was a bare-footed boy working as a sweeper in the cotton-mill. He now owns a cotton-mill, and one of the finest houses in the country."

I saw his mill, and I saw his house. Indeed the house, with

its park, its lawns and flowers, and granite walls inclosing them, was the finest residence I saw anywhere. While I was still pursuing my investigations, a poor mother came along within a few hundred feet of where this mill-owner had been standing. With her two little children she was picking up coals along the railroad track, because the law would not allow the mill-man to employ either of them. One of them in darting out of the way of one train, fell in front of another and was ground to death. That is what the child-labor law did for Gaston County while I was there.

Now let us see what the mills have done for the county since "Popsy Rhyne" put up his first mill, and there were no child-labor laws inhibiting him from gathering the hungry children in and teaching them to spin. There were no schools or school-houses then, but moonshiners there were, and murders galore. Since then whiskey has been driven out of the county, and in place of its fifty moonshine-stills, fifty cotton-mills raise their tall chimneys to the sky.

There are no longer huddled children, nearly freezing to death in the few poor schools the State was making a heroic attempt to establish along in the latter part of the seventies, after "Popsy Rhyne" had started his mill, but nearly every district in the county has its school-house now, with four months' school, while every cotton-mill has its eight months school, or did until the panic and hard times put some of them out of business.

You may travel across Gaston County now, as I did by rail and by team, and look in vain for the hungry children, and indolent mothers and fathers, once too lazy to wash their clothes and plant a vegetable garden. They are no longer to be found, for Gaston's fifty cotton-mills have turned their children into good citizens, and wives and mothers, many of them rearing good families, with their husbands stockholders in the mills.

Gastonia, where formerly there was nothing, is now a thriving city with its twelve mills round about, supporting a mill

population of 7,500,¹ with six public schools and nineteen teachers for white children.

Should credence not be given to what I relate, let us turn to the Federal Census and State Educational Reports, and see what they show. The census returns for 1870 show that Gaston County's population numbered 12,602. There are no school reports for that year — none until the year 1879, some time after "Popsy Rhyne" had started his mill "murdering children." Meager data, collected since then, show that the amount paid for public education in the State was about eleven cents per child of school age.

During the epoch when "Popsy Rhyne" started his mill, and another mill or two followed, the population in the county increased slightly, the census showing about thirteen per cent increase. But during the next decade, with more mills going up, the increase nearly doubled, and for the decade following with the mills running full speed, the increase was 57.7 per cent. But during the last decade, when several of the mills were obliged to shut down, due to the panic of 1907, the increase dropped back to 32.8 per cent. The total increase since "Popsy Rhyne" began "murdering the children" with his mill, is shown to be 194.1 per cent, or nearly two hundred per cent!

As I contemplate the above figures, I am constrained to wonder where all the "murdered children" were buried who did not survive this enormous increase.

But my good friend, the educator, who was trying to raise funds to educate some of the children where they did not have the blessing of the cotton-mill to educate and feed them both, said that the minister at High Shoals told her that while the little white children had to work in the mills, the negro children went to school and had nice warm clothing. When I asked her where these negro children got the money to pay for their nice warm clothing, so much better than that of the whites who worked, she replied that she did not know.

¹ The total population of the township is 12,268 and that within the corporate limits of the town is 5,759.

"Snowball," a very black one, who drove me from Belmont up to Mount Holly, and fell asleep in the wagon, as most negroes do when they haven't work enough to keep them awake, said he did not go to school, and he didn't get much to eat. Nor did his clothing look as though he got much of that, either. When I asked him what he got to eat, he said corn pone and chicken.

"Yes, you do," said I. "You get chicken when you steal it." And he opened his big mouth, showing his ivory teeth in a huge grin.

When I told him I was a Yankee, his eyes opened nearly as wide as his mouth, as he exclaimed, "You one o' dem, boss?" and he did not go to sleep any more, but kept his eyes right on me as though he did not know what to expect next.

When I told him what a variety of things I got to eat where I came from, he exclaimed again,

"Whar' is dat country, boss? Do dey let niggers go dar?"

Now let us see how the school reports show these colored children going to school while the white ones work in the mills.¹ By the report of 1907 and '08, before the panic, when the mills were running full time, the average daily attendance at the white schools in Gastonia, the town with the largest number of cotton mills, is shown to have been 57.7 per cent of the enrollment, while the colored attendance was 48.2 per cent. This looks to me as though former Senator Beveridge, before he makes another speech on child labor, had better do a little investigating for himself, and not depend upon the "special interests" to do it for him.

My investigations with respect to the school attendance, showed that where the greater number of spindles was in operation, and where the mills had been established longest, the larger was the percentage of white children at the schools, and

¹"Yet the children who are at work in the Southern cotton-mills are from the white working class of the South; and this terrible situation stares the South in the face, that, whereas the children of the white working people of the South are going to the mill and to decay, the negro childreu are going to school and improvement," speech of Hon. Albert J. Beveridge before the U. S. Senate. Jan, 1907.

less the percentage of illiteracy. I found too, that the reports rendered to the State Superintendent of Public Instruction could not always be relied upon, particularly those coming from the more remote rural districts. In more than one instance districts were visited in which there had been no school, yet school money was drawn from the State for the support of same, and returns made showing enrollment, attendance, etc.

A careful analysis of the available school statistics, however, showed a higher percentage of school attendance in the districts having cotton mills, than in the districts having none. For the purpose of learning just what they did show, while in the Bureau of Labor, I had tabulations made showing the attendance, illiteracy, etc., in counties having cotton mills and counties having no mills, and these showed the educational conditions to be much better in the counties having the mills, particularly in those counties where the mills had been longest established, yet the Commissioner of Labor gave as his reason for refusing to accept my findings, that I did not have a particle of evidence to sustain them.

Our social reformers and agitators, when confronted with the fact that, with few exceptions, there are no compulsory school laws in the South, cry out,

“Then they should have them!”

But they might as well insist upon a law compelling me to buy the choicest cuts of beef for my children's breakfast, when I have not the money wherewith to buy them.

“But make the State pay!” say the Socialists, and when they are asked where the State is going to get the money to pay with, they say, “Take it from the the rich!”

But let us suppose that this rule was in effect when poor old North Carolina had no rich, and could barely expend eleven cents per child for public education. How would the Socialist theory work?

If put into practice, now that she has a few rich, she would be obliged to take all the money they have to maintain such an elaborate and extravagant educational system as is maintained

in some of our wealthier States, like New York, for example, which gets millions of revenue from corporation taxes, sale of stamps on the transfer of stock certificates, and other taxes, direct or indirect, levied upon its enormous industries. North Carolina having taken the money of the rich, the question may well be asked, whence would she get any more rich from whom to take the required revenue for the upkeep of the



THE BEST FARM HOUSE IN A TWENTY-SEVEN MILE DRIVE

In Sampson County where there are no cotton-mills or other manufacturing industries.

elaborate and extravagant educational system thus inaugurated?

That the industries do produce their share of revenue is shown by the amount of Gaston County's school fund for 1909 and 10, exclusive of the private support of many of the schools in part, by the cotton-mills. The total amount of the fund, as reported, was \$55,731.99, the bulk of this being raised by direct taxation. On the other hand, Sampson County with a land area nearly three times that of Gaston County, and without any manufacturing industries, had a fund of only \$43,658.-

13. Furthermore, while the cotton-mill towns of Gaston County were maintaining an average school term of one hundred and sixty days, poor old Sampson County averaged a term of only eighty-six days. With the industrial development in many of her counties, the State's per capita for the education of each child, has increased from eleven cents in 1879, to \$4.82 in 1910, and it is steadily increasing all the time.¹

I drove twenty-seven miles in Sampson County to see a good priest who was trying to educate some of its children, in a school of his own, taught by two Dominican sisters. He had gathered in from miles around, eight or ten children, hook-worm specimens, such as I had seen in the cotton-mill where the two girls were crowded down in a bobbin-box, and two others were asleep, one on the floor, and another in a box.

My advice to the good priest, after he had regaled me on a dinner of ham and eggs, and had shown me his school and church, was to build a cotton-mill. If he did not believe it, I advised him to go to Duke, whence I had driven that morning, and see the wonderful work that mill had accomplished within the brief period of five years.

If I had ten thousand dollars to expend in charity, I believe I would give it to that priest to start an industry in that lonely corner of Sampson County. Notwithstanding his having gathered in less than a dozen children from the surrounding country, and brought in two sisters to teach them, the census report shows the population of the place to have decreased from seventy-five persons in 1900 to seventy-three in 1910, while at Duke, the population had increased from nothing in 1900, to two thousand six hundred and three in 1910.² And Duke has four churches, each of them on lots donated by the mill-corporation, and built with money donated by the mill-corporation, irrespective of their creeds. It has a graded school

¹ The Report shows that the available fund for each child at the rural schools, was \$3.92, while that of those attending city schools was \$9.05, and the average for the State is given as \$4.82.

² The census report does not give the population of the mill village, as it is not an incorporated town, but its estimated population is between sixteen and seventeen hundred.

built with the mill-corporation's money, and taught by six teachers and a principal, also paid in part by the corporation, the State's fund being used to pay the teachers' salaries for four months only, the corporation meeting all other expenses for a seven months' school. The school census shows a school population of six hundred and forty-six, the school age in the State being between the ages of six and twenty-one. Of those between the ages of twelve and twenty-one, only thirty-eight were found unable to read and write. The children enrolled in the school were found to number two hundred and fifteen, while at the night school, maintained entirely by the corporation, sixty-nine mill-workers were enrolled.¹ Finally I ascertained that the death rate in this community for the year just past was only eleven per thousand! Yet, a great "progressive" statesmen had told our Congress, that "the infant factory slaves" in the opinion of the learned Elbert Hubbard, "under oath, mind you,"—"were set free by death within four years," and that "there are no mortality statistics; the mill-owners baffle all attempts of the outside public to get at the facts."²

Shortly before I was called back to Washington from my second investigation, I was riding along through the lonesome woods of Henderson County. Suddenly turning a bend in the road, I heard the sound of carpenters' hammers, and saw several new houses going up, some of them being finished. Below the houses rose the smokestack and the busy hum of a cotton-mill. I had not expected to find a mill in such a place, and jumping off my horse, I went in.

There were little children in there all around. Some were standing, some were piecing up ends and some were sitting down. They had been gathered in with their parents and elder brothers and sisters, from the fields and woods. Some of their parents had jobs, but only a few. For the others there was nothing for them to do, for they could not learn to spin. Some of their elder brothers and sisters stood at the speeders. There were young men with bare arms folded, faces washed, and hair

¹ These figures were obtained at Duke.

² Senator Beveridge's Speech, January 1907.

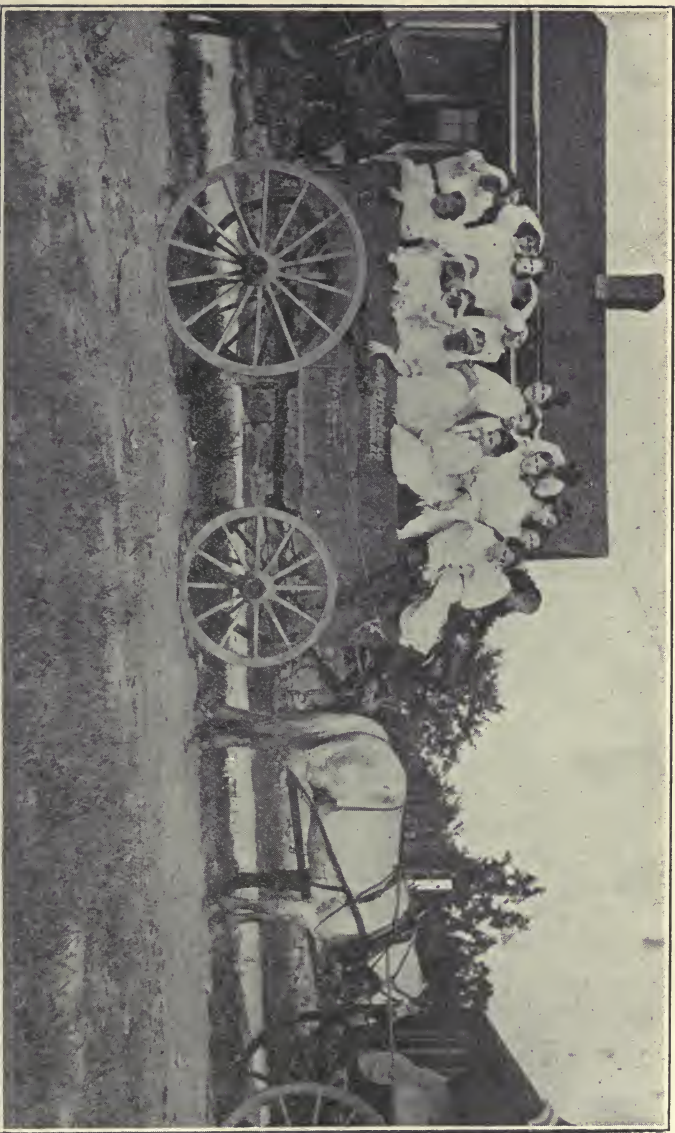
soaped and plastered down, and young women still in their sunbonnets, watching the big bobbins go round.

The mill, though a small one, was one of the finest I ever saw. Its floor was as clean as wax; its ventilation was perfect, and there were windows everywhere. It had just begun its great work of gathering in the poor, ignorant children, and not only educating them, but giving them their bread and meat, and something besides. Its last spinning-frame had been put in motion that very day. While it was making no pretense of feeding those children on the alphabet, the alphabet would undoubtedly come later, in proof of which a school-house was going up, where never had been a school-house before.

Of course the men who had conceived this enterprise, who had harnessed the hitherto useless mountain stream, developed its power, and started an industry giving employment to only a few of those who were never regularly employed before, intended to earn dividends for their stockholders. But don't our school-teachers, our ministers, and our missionaries demand pay for their work, and usually clamor for more?

Less than half a mile from that mill, I came to a little girl in an open field. The sun beat hot upon her head, as with a heavy mattock she broke up the ground for planting a crop of corn. Her legs were bare, her skirts being girdled high around her waist. As I looked at her, I recalled the two girls working for John Africa, down in Mississippi, when Mr. Wainwright took over the management of the mill at Stonewall, nearly forty years ago. There are no more such now around Mr. Wainwright's mill.

That mill which I saw beginning its operations in the lonesome woods of Henderson County, is now the center of a thriving and prosperous community. It gives employment to two hundred and fifty persons, of whom two hundred are now skilled operatives, and it has an excellent village school eight months of the year. I doubt whether there can be found within the zone of influence of that mill, a single girl working in the field with a mattock or a hoe. The mill has taken such and started them upon the road of true progress and development.



ONE OF THE RECREATIONS OF THE COTTON-MILL GIRLS

Going on a hay ride at the Proximity Mills at which it is stated in Vol. XVI of the Commissioner's Report; the worker's have little or no opportunity for recreation and improvement. Mr. Beveridge stated in a recent speech in Carnegie Hall N. Y., that the failure of the Report to disclose all the facts in the investigation was due to the tremendous efforts of the manufacturers who get their dividends from woman and child labor.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

THE GOVERNMENT AND THE INTERESTS.

It was evident throughout the investigation that not only were the Bureau officials biased as to what the investigation should show, but it was sought to obtain such facts only as would show that factory employment is detrimental to the employed. The Commissioner of Labor himself referred to certain business men as pirates, and declared in my presence that one, manufacturer who had attempted to convince him that the employment of the poor children in the cotton-mills of the South had proved beneficial to them, was a liar. He instructed his agents at the mills to seek the very worst conditions, and every effort was made to gather data that would support the representations of those special interests whose very existence is dependent upon their misrepresentations. Agents were sent at Government expense to attend one of their conventions at least, while on the other hand they were cautioned to doubt the manufacturer and all statements that would tend to reflect credit upon him. It was openly assumed that he was dishonest, and any information obtained from him could not be relied upon ; in other words, that he was anything but a desirable citizen.

While I did not believe Senator Beveridge had wilfully perverted the truth in his speech denouncing child labor in the South, I was aware that he did not know any more about the subject than I knew when I began my part of the investigation. He was merely the mouthpiece of the organizations that supplied him with the material for his speech and urged him to deliver it, just as they subsequently supplied Colonel Roosevelt

with similar material and induced him to present it to a large assembly gathered in Carnegie Hall, New York.

As a special agent of the government employed to get the facts, it seemed to me that these wicked and fraudulent misrepresentations, when discovered, should be made public by that branch of the Government that was charged with obtaining them. Instead of this being done, however, the efforts of the Bureau of Labor were directed toward the elimination from its reports of much of the information, if not all that would tend to reflect credit upon the manufacturer or the industry that gave the employed their means of subsistence, or that tended to show that the employment was not harmful but, in many instances, was beneficial. As the truth was developed by unbiased agents, every means were taken to protect the interests of those who make the false representations and live by them. Yet former Senator Beveridge, following upon the heels of our ex-President, with his remarkable doctrine of "Progress," declared to an assembly again gathered in Carnegie Hall that the lack of clearness in the Commissioner's eighteen-volume report was due to the tremendous efforts of the manufacturing interests that get their dividends from child labor. The senator forgot that he was speaking for those special interests that, while they do not get their dividends from child labor, get their salaries through misrepresentations of it. Of his own knowledge he knew nothing, and, like our ex-President, he merely spoke the lines he was told to speak.

As illustrative of the misrepresentations that are made is the oft-repeated statement that little children, as young as five years, are forced to toil in the factories. As our ex-President spoke this line, directing his gaze over the multitude, an evident thrill of horror went through the assembly. But if one would only pause a moment to consider how little a five-year-old child could do that would be profitable to the manufacturer, he would see at once the absurdity of the statement. Yet the interests that live by such misrepresentations go even further

and declare that toddling babes of three years are employed!

They not only supplied our ex-President with such stuff as this, for his Carnegie Hall speech, but they made him say, among other things, that "through the attempted suicide of little Alma Whaley, at Knoxville, Tennessee, the discovery was made that the cotton-mill girls had entered into a compact to commit suicide, owing to the awful conditions under which they were obliged to toil."

In this case the "little Alma Whaley" referred to was a seventeen-year-old girl; there was no suicidal compact at all; and the cotton-mill had no more to do with her attempted suicide than Colonel Roosevelt had. The girl came with her family from the mountains of Eastern Tennessee when she was about fourteen years old. The family subsequently returned to the farm, where they attempted to make a crop, but, failing to get adequate returns, they again came to Knoxville. Some time in the interval of their migrations, the father killed himself by putting rat poison in his whiskey, and there was also an aunt or near relative who killed herself. The day of "little Alma's attempted suicide" she told one of her girl companions that she wanted to visit a married sister living in Lynchburg, Virginia, and that if her mother did not let her go, she intended to kill herself. The mere newspaper report of this girl's attempted suicide was seized upon by the interests to attribute it to the cotton-mill and alleged conditions therein.

Among the glaring examples of the suppression of the truth by the Bureau of Labor, which Mr. Beveridge attributes to the manufacturer, who, he alleges, gets his dividends from child labor, was the suppression of a voluminous report by that eminent hook-worm authority, Dr. Charles Wardell Stiles, who found that the children from the poor farms were greatly benefited through the opportunities opened up to them at the cotton-mills, even though they were employed in some instances so that they did not go to school. Nor was this all. The corroborative evidence sustaining Dr. Stiles's report, to

the effect that the health of the employed improved after their employment in the mills, obtained by the field agents from the cotton-mill operatives themselves, was eliminated from the Bureau reports. Yet we are told that the incompleteness of these reports are due to the tremendous efforts of the manufacturer who gets his dividends from child labor.

When Dr. Stiles boldly asserted that he looked upon the cotton-mills as the greatest and almost only friends the poor folk of the South have; that he could not concur in the popular condemnation to which the mills are constantly subjected; and that he considered the children infinitely better off in the cotton-mills than on the soil-polluted, disease-breeding, privy-less, one-horse farms, he was denounced by those interests whose very existence is dependent upon their misrepresentations; for were it known definitely that Dr. Stiles spoke the truth and nothing but the truth, it is doubtful whether those interests could raise a cent from those who now give so freely to what they consider a laudable cause.

Among the many examples of how the people are humbugged is one that came to my attention at Columbus, Georgia, where, as I have shown, the training of the cotton-mill children begins in the kindergarten, and thence they go to the graded schools, which, as a matter of fact, are better conducted than our public schools at the National Capital. It is the custom, however, at Columbus, to let the children leave the mill-schools before the noon hour, in order that they may carry the dinner to such members of their families as are employed in the mills. One of the sights of the mill district is to see the youngsters hurrying along with their huge baskets, some of the baskets in baby carriages, some in little carts, and some of them lugged along on the little arms of the "dinner toters," all of whom, with happy, smiling faces, hurry on to wait at the mill gates, which they are never allowed to pass.

This fact was seized upon by a notoriously sensational writer, who, not satisfied with the actual photographs of these happy, hurrying, contented school children, "toting dinners"



A COTTON-MILL FAMILY AT HOME

They pay three dollars a month for the rent of their house and employ a negro cook who is shown in the background of the photograph. The Commissioner of Labor, however, in his Report, endeavors to show that such families are maintained worse than the prisoners in the Federal Prison at Atlanta, Ga., due to their inadequate pay.

during their well-regulated recess hour, had them re-drawn as long, lanky, skinny children with dinner-pails, marching into the yawning mills, where it was alleged, they were forced to toil during the long hours of man's working day. This outrageous lie was published in one of the most widely circulated and respectable journals that we have, and the testimony of the woman who committed the outrage was cited by Senator Beveridge in his speech denouncing child labor in the cotton-mills of the South.

One of the stock photographs of the interests that live by these misrepresentations represent a woman and nine children, taken at Tifton, Georgia. The children are arranged for the photograph in a row, from a toddling babe up to a girl of perhaps fourteen. The photograph, although taken several years ago, has been published and re-published, and is still being published, and lantern slides of it are exhibited, with varying statements that diverge from the truth as much as the "little Alma Whaley" yarn. The last time I saw the picture published, it was by that "Progressive," La. Follette, in his weekly, in which he declared that the Commissioner's Report on child labor was a "Black Record." In connection with the picture, it was said that all but three of the nine children worked in the mill, earning together three and a half dollars weekly.

I subsequently saw the same picture exhibited by that learned Doctor McKelway, Southern Secretary of the National Child Labor Committee, under the auspices of a suffragette organization, and he told another story about it.

The facts in this case are that the family was a tramp family or a family of semi-nomads, such as I have described elsewhere as having been quite common in the South before there were any industries that gave them employment and taught them how to work. The family lived around in the pine woods of Southern Georgia, abiding from time to time in abandoned shacks or wherever they could find shelter. The mother and father continued to bring children into the world at the rate

of about one a year until they had eleven, when they found their way to the cotton-mill. There they were given a house to live in, and they were supplied with food and clothing, for they were destitute, and four of the children, ranging in years from twelve up, were given employment. Employment was offered to both the father and the mother, but they would not or could not work with any degree of efficiency. However, the improvement in this family, after their arrival at the mill and the older children went to work, was most marked. After a while they went to another mill, where the father died of tuberculosis. The mother then returned with her brood to Tifton, where the two eldest girls married, leaving the mother with her nine remaining children dependent for support on the two that were old enough to work. The manager of the cotton-mill thereupon used his influence to get the seven younger children into a Methodist orphan asylum, and he took them there himself.

In the meantime the photograph of the mother and nine children was taken by a representative of the special interests that live by misrepresentations, and this is the photograph that is published and exhibited throughout the country before Sunday School classes and suffragette meetings, depicting the evils of child labor, when the fact is that the little children represented as working in the cotton-mill were in an orphan asylum, and never had worked a day in their lives.

Nor do the interests confine their misrepresentations to the South. There is on record at Ludlow, Massachusetts, an affidavit to the effect that during a strike there, several years ago, children were hired to take off their shoes and stockings and coats, so that they were reduced to shirt sleeves and bare feet, and then they were photographed in the snow, as showing the horrors of child labor at that place. Nor need we go back so far in years as to the strike at Ludlow for such cruel misrepresentations. We need only refer to the recent strike in Lawrence, where similar misrepresentations were made, and where among other things the mill management was blamed

because ignorant foreigners do not care to maintain a better standard of living than they do. While the agitators and interests were crying out against the alleged starvation wages paid by the mills, ignorant Polish women, under arrest, were found to have secreted in their clothing a thousand dollars each, while deposits in the savings bank by other mill workers, totalling many thousands of dollars, were proof enough that the many who wanted to save out of their "starvation wages" not only could do so, but did do so.

While thousands of dollars were squandered by the Federal Bureau of Labor, in its investigation of woman and child labor, to prove that the manufacturers are rascals; that they lie with respect to the ages of the children employed; that they hide them away when investigators are sent to report upon them; and that they employ them because they get their labor cheaper than they can get the same labor from adults; and finally that they compel them to work when they should be in school, and underfeed and underpay their employees generally—not a word of the revelations showing the misrepresentations of the agitators, reformers and other interests of the kind was allowed to go before the public in the reports.

The country was scoured to find the little children as young as five years, at work in the mills, and at last the final report shows that one was found, but the reliability of this find may be judged when it is pointed out that on one page of the report the child is represented as working in South Carolina, while on another page it is stated that he or she (it is not clear which) was working in Georgia! The truth of the matter is that no such child was working at all. If such a child was found in a mill, it was undoubtedly the child of some poor woman who was allowed, through the kindness of the mill superintendent, to bring her child into the mill while she worked to support it. Such was the circumstance in the case of the little child photographed by Lewis W. Hine, and represented as a child worker in the mill near Lincolnton, North Carolina, shown elsewhere. In no State in the South is a

child legally permitted to work in a mill under the age of twelve, while in three of the States the age limit is fourteen, and in Texas it is fifteen.

It may be argued that the law is violated, and so it may be in some instances. For example, I put to a mill superintendent, on one occasion, the hypothetical question, suppose a mother in dire distress should come to him with her ten or twelve-year old child and beg employment for it by which she could get her support and live comfortably.

"It being against the law for you to employ the child," I asked, "what would you do?"

The mill man paused for a moment with his eyes fixed upon the ground, and then raising them suddenly, he exclaimed,

"Damn the law! I would give the kid a job."

But not all mill men assume this attitude, as was shown in my interview with the ex-sheriff mill owner at Liledoun. He would not break the law, because he had sworn to support the Constitution and laws of his State. The large corporations do not break the laws, if for no other reason than that very young children can not be economically employed, and that as law-breakers they can not run their business.

Sometimes children under the age limit do get into the mills, and the superintendents or owners have not the heart to put them out, as related in my interview with Mr. Hamilton at Dalton; or they are put out, as was done in the case of the children in the big mill at Knoxville, where they were virtually driven back to their mountain home of ignorance, squalor and vice, or to beggary and licentiousness in the city streets.

A newly established mill, like the one I discovered in the woods of Henderson County, may let young children in, not as toilers, however, but as "learners," which, "learning," as a matter of fact, is the best and most practical education they can have. And in such a case as this, as I have shown, the

graded school soon follows the establishment of the mill, and the child is sent to school, as was shown by the tabulations of the school statistics compiled under my directions in the Bureau of Labor, after my return from the field the first time. Wherever the industry goes up, up goes the church and school house, and the school attendance increases accordingly. The larger the corporation, the bigger the capitalist standing behind it, the less the liability of any violation of the law and the greater are the advantages offered the children; for it is at the biggest mills that the better schools are built, and the big mills are the least affected by panics and hard times, while the attendance of the school children is insisted upon by the mill president, whose mandate is usually the only compulsory school law within the State.

These are some of the things that the Child Labor Committees and their allied organizations do not tell and do not wish told; were the facts known, their business would cease. Yet they condemn the business interests of the country, the men who make the wheels of industry go round and set the pace for real progress. An example of this is presented in the case of a large manufacturer with a cotton-mill at Lanette, Alabama, where he built and equipped a school-house costing \$20,000.00. This school is thrown open not only to the children of the mill-families, but to the children of Lanette who have no connection with the mill whatever, and, with the exception of the small amount allotted by the State for public education, the maintenance of the school and the pay of the teachers are provided for at the expense of the corporation. Tired of the misrepresentations made, the manufacturer, in this instance, sent a photograph of the school building, with the information, to the State Child Labor Association of Massachusetts, offering to pay for having the photograph framed if they would hang it in their rooms. The photograph was returned with the information that the Association had no use for it.

The child labor associations want nothing that is favorable to the manufacturing interests, or that reflects credit upon them. But they will amass any amount of testimony, photographs and distorted facts that tremendously exaggerate and misrepresent the supposed evils of child labor. It was the Child Labor Committee, and allied organizations, that lobbied at Washington to induce Congress to authorize the woman and child labor investigation. Having succeeded in this, they bent their unremitting efforts to see that the investigation secured only such facts as would support their interests. A salaried representative was stationed at Washington, and not only was he allowed by that branch of the Government authorized to make the investigation to set forth and direct just what the investigation should develop, but much of the work that was done and subsequently set aside or destroyed as worthless was based upon his representations and done by his guidance.

With respect to my own work, pressure was brought to bear upon me in the Bureau, which was fairly honeycombed with agents of the organizations, to induce me to reverse my findings, and when this could not be done with implied threats, I was promoted to a higher position, given a larger salary and ordered to do the work over again, and at the same time advised that the prosecution of the work was dependent upon the results obtained. In other words, unless I obtained the results that were desired, my employment would cease. And such proved to be the case.

As soon as it was definitely ascertained by the Bureau that the detailed evidence I was securing proved beyond question that the poor people from the rural districts were greatly benefited by their removal to the industries where they could obtain employment, even though some of their children worked, I was ordered to close up the work and return to Washington. Upon my return to the Bureau, the Commissioner himself frowned upon the work, while the rank and file of his office force reviled, criticised and condemned me.

A large force of clerks was immediately assigned to tabulate the data I had secured ; but I soon discovered that the tabulation was not being done correctly, and when it was found that by no process of juggling could the data be made to show that the people were better off on their so called farms than they were at the factories, it became evident that there was no intention of making use of the information, and the paramount question seemed to be, how to get rid of me.

I attempted to lay the entire matter before the Commissioner, in whose honesty I had had implicit faith ; but he refused to see me, and it was not until I put in an application for leave of absence that he consented to do so. He thereupon attempted to berate the work I had done, to cast aspersions upon its accuracy, and he referred to alleged investigations of the same matter by other interests, in which it was maintained that contrary results were obtained. He made it plain that the results of my investigation did not meet with the views of the Bureau, and that as soon as the tabulation of the data was done and I could make my report, my services would no longer be required. I then and there tendered my resignation ; and in reducing it to writing, I accused the Commissioner with official dishonesty and left the Bureau.

The result of this action was an invitation from the Commissioner's chief executive, to return and talk the matter over, as it was believed that my letter was written with undue haste and under stress of excitement. A letter to the same effect followed from the Commissioner. Further than that, the statement was made by his executive that my services were absolutely necessary in order to carry the results of my field work to a successful termination. I certainly did not wish to give up the work, and I was greatly interested in seeing that it was properly terminated. I therefore readily embraced the opportunity to return and perhaps complete it.

In the interview that followed, the Commissioner assumed an attitude entirely different from his previous one. He said

I was mistaken in my belief that he had any intention of berating me or my work, and he repeated that my services were absolutely necessary in order to complete the results of my investigation. But as my letter of resignation contained charges against his administration of the Bureau, he could not allow me to continue in the Bureau with that letter on file. In view of this circumstance, he asked me to write him another letter, stating that the charges were made under stress of misunderstanding and undue excitement, and that they were not true. If I would do this, my services would be continued permanently.

I refused thus to stultify myself, although several attempts were made to induce me to do so. All I would agree to do was to withdraw my letter of resignation, which I did, and I returned to my desk, continuing the work in hand. After an interval of a month, I was notified to terminate the work as there was no more money available to pay me for my services. It was evident, then, that having been induced to withdraw my letter of resignation, I was to be discharged.

Convinced of the trickery and deception to which I was subjected, and that the Bureau had no intention of using the results of my investigation, I undertook to lay the entire matter before the Secretary of Commerce and Labor. In doing this I ran up against the Assistant Secretary, a wonderful man named McHarg. He first ran me out of his office, and ten minutes later he telephoned me to come back. When I laid before him some of the evidence I had of the dishonest work of the Bureau, he ranted and stormed. He declared the Commissioner crooked, citing an example of his inefficient or dishonest work, contained in a report that had already come before him, the printing of which he had refused to sanction. And, finally, he invited me to confront him with the evidence of some of my charges.

Without hesitation I confronted the Commissioner with the evidence of the charges, whereupon I found the attitude of the wonderful man, McHarg, completely reversed and the

hearing that followed was akin to what might be expected were an attempt made to prefer charges against the devil in the infernal regions. The issue was clouded by an endeavor to show that my schedule work was faulty, and the results of the investigation were of little value if not worthless, because the families scheduled in the rural districts, were not in the cotton-mills.

Finally, when the Commissioner was confronted with the records in the Bureau showing that the data obtained in the field, declaring that children were paid the same for the same work as adults, had been made to read otherwise, he declared that the printed inquiries on the schedules did not mean what they said, and I was brusquely ordered out of the office.

In the meantime I had been treacherously ambushed with allegations made to Senator Overman, of North Carolina, that I had made a report that would cast great discredit upon his State, if it were allowed to go before the public; that the report was obscene and unprintable and that, among other things, I had declared there was not a virtuous woman in the counties where the investigation was conducted. As a matter of fact my two daughters were attending school in the very section of North Carolina from which it was alleged that I had made such a declaration.

Thus the results of two years work, paid for by the people, were suppressed. Subsequently, when the Commissioner of Labor, or the representatives of the special interests, were asked about the suppression of this work, the reply was to the effect that I was a disgruntled employee who had been discharged from the Bureau; the allegations that I had made obscene and unprintable reports were continued, and as to the charges against the Bureau, the inference was conveyed that they were the outcome of my discharge, and it was stated finally, that the charges had been fully investigated and nothing found in them.

The truth of the matter is, the interests which walk hand in hand with the Bureau of Labor do not propose to have

any facts published, least of all by the Government, that tend to injure their business. On the other hand, the real business interests of the country are practically without representation. While they have their organizations in some instances, these organizations may well be compared to armed camps of belligerents, eternally on the defensive. They have able men to represent them, lawyers and counselors, but these are simply like pickets thrown out to watch and wait. In the meantime the industries are assailed on every hand by those organizations whose only industry consists of stirring up strife, breeding discontent, engendering class hatred and sowing the seeds of revolution.

Popular opinion has been so directed against the manufacturing interests of the country that they now have but few friends, if any at all. They are allowed hardly any representation at Washington, and when demagogues appealing for votes make deliberate misrepresentations respecting industrial conditions or the conditions under which labor is employed, there rarely appears any one in our political fabric with fortitude enough to state the manufacturer's side of the case. Should one do so, he is immediately attacked with allegations that he is an emissary of the trusts, is hired by them, or stands in with them. In fact, such allegations are one of the strongest weapons of the muck-raking organizations.

When I was thrown out of the Bureau of Labor, it seemed but just and reasonable that I should turn to the manufacturing interests of the country for assistance and support in getting a fair presentation of my case before the Secretary of Commerce and Labor, and before the public in general. But the very first manufacturer whom I approached, the same whom the Commissioner of Labor had declared a liar because he had undertaken to show that the poor child was much better off learning industrious habits in a cotton mill than growing up in idleness, ran like a turkey. He stated that he did not want to get mixed up in what he

termed my fight, and furthermore, were the manufacturers to assist me in any way, the charge would be made that I was working in their interests for pay.

About the same time I was recommended to the general counsel of one of the largest manufacturing organizations in the country, who at first assured me that he would give me legal assistance in getting a fair presentation of my case before a committee, appointed by the Secretary of Commerce and Labor, to investigate my charges. After several postponements and delays, I was advised to handle the case myself, because he was known as an attorney for the manufacturers. When with more truth than sense of good judgment and discretion, perhaps, I told him that he and his manufacturers were a bunch of cowards, I was no longer a persona grata in his office.

Later, when I accepted an invitation to address another manufacturers' association, and pointed out some of the prevailing conditions in the rural districts in which I had carried on my investigations, and showed how these conditions were remedied by the removal of the very poor to the industries, the fact was seized upon by the Southern Secretary of the National Child Labor Committee to announce publicly that I had "occupied myself addressing Southern cotton-mill associations," telling their members, "how humane and kind-hearted they were, while at one of the conventions suitable financial arrangements were made for the publication of" my articles.

My address before the association referred to was printed and published by the association. There was not a line in that address, or any other address delivered by me, telling the manufacturers "how humane and kind hearted they were," and as to "suitable financial arrangements being made for the publication of" my articles, I was not even reimbursed to the extent of my railroad expenses for going several hundred miles to address them. But the fact that I did address them was seized upon by the opposing interests to make it appear that I was in their employ, or was subsidized by them.

On the other hand, with a spirit of entire frankness, I am free to state that I should willingly have accepted such financial aid the association might have seen fit to give me, to place the story of my investigation before the people. Not that I was or am at all interested in any manufacturing enterprises whatsoever, but because I had become convinced of the great wrong being done a class of very poor people, our own people, by the persistent agitation and misrepresentations of conditions effecting their welfare, and the ultimate aim to inhibit their further progress through the open doors of the industries that lead them to better things, even though in some instances their children are obliged to work.

THE END.

INDEX

THE CHILD THAT TOILETH NOT

A

ADULTS, appearance of, attending speeders, at Asheville mill, 20.
 Age, prevarication about, 20.
 limit law, observance of, 481-483.
 Ages at which children work, 36, 41, 44, 49, 61-62, 73, 83.
 Alabama, bad condition of one of the mills in, 441.
 Alexander County, N. C., noted for efficient labor, 98.
 Anchor Mills, Rome, Ga., work accomplished at, 454.
 Anders, Bill, shooting of, 329-330.
 Appropriation of \$300,000, and terms thereof, for investigating condition of woman and child-workers, 5.
 Ashby, Miss, cited in Beveridge speech, 3.
 Asheville, N. C., incidents of trip to, 11-13.
 small mill in, reported to have some of worst phases of child labor, 11.
 boss weaver at, interview with, 78.
 District Solicitor of, discusses local conditions, 12-14.
 first visit to mill district and impressions of, 15, 17.
 conditions in cotton mill at, 17-84.
 night school for mill children at, 25.
 men only employed at carding machines in, 20.
 Superintendent of Schools of, discusses conditions in city and state, 40-42.
 "mothers' meeting" at mill in, 23.
 wages at, 72-73.
 mill at, running after panic in New York, 278.
 Author, the, files application with Civil Service Commission to investigate conditions among women and child workers, 5.
 results of Civil Service examination taken by, 5-6.
 receives appointment for investigation work, 6, 9.
 Government suppression of facts gathered by, 7.
 course of reading of, preparatory to field work, 9-11.

Author, the, directed to study rural conditions, 11.
 arrested for riding on sidewalk in Bakersville, N. C., 208.
 return of, to Washington after first tour of investigation, 278.
 authenticity of facts reported by, on first tour, denied, 280.
 reception of first report of, 280.
 charge by, that Bureau of Labor is prejudiced, 292.
 asked to submit plans for a second investigation, and placed in full charge, 293.
 outlines method and schedules of second investigation, 295-302.
 difficulty of, in obtaining competent assistants for second tour of investigation, 304-307.
 reported drowned, 318.
 reception of second report of, 484-487.
 addresses of, before manufacturers' associations, 489.

B

BAKERSVILLE, N. C., account of, 207-209.
 Barytes Mill, N. C., 357.
 Basket making followed sporadically, 188, 190, 276.
 Begging, child driven to, 222-223.
 Beveridge, Senator, Speech, resumé of, 1-4.
 culmination of campaign against employment of children, 5.
 quotation from, 467.
 ignorant of real conditions in the South, 471, 474-475, 479.
 Birchfield, still of, in Chilhowee Mountains, raided, 253.
 sets bear traps for revenue officers, 253-254.
 Blockaders, 392-393.
 anecdotes of, 132-134.
 "Bloody Madison," N. C., known throughout State for lawlessness, 129, 263.
 improvement in, after establishment of mill, 129, 142.
 Boo-goo-land, deacon of, 400-403.
 Boss weaver at Asheville, interview with, 78.
 Bryson City, N. C., conditions in, 269-270.

- Buchanan family, 314-315.
 Leroy, improvement of family of, at mills, 315.
 Bureau of Labor, Thomas R. Dawley, Jr., appointed special agent of, 9. qualifications for appointment by, 5-6.
 employees of, 280-283.
 evidence of corruption in, 440.
 salaries paid by, 284, 286.
 mutilation of reports by, 284. 287-289.
 money expended by, 440.
 officials of, biased, 474-475.
 Burglary a capital offense in North Carolina, 143.
 Burnsville. N. C., 216-217.

C

- CADES COVE, TENN., people of, 251.
 Calhoun, S. C., mill at, 449.
 Caroleen, N. C., mill at, 449-450.
 Cataloochee, N. C., a haunt of the Mathis family, 270.
 Central, S. C., mill at, 449.
 Chadwick-Hoskins Mill, pride of landscape architect at, 432.
 Chair making, 379.
 "Charleston News," quotation from, 426.
 Chestnut Flats, Tenn., visit to, 252.
 chief citizen's description of people around, 254.
 Child-idleness, results of, to future citizens and country in general. 93.
 Child labor, report on, compiled from hearsay evidence, 31.
 comparison of, in South, with adult labor in North, 409.
 biased method of investigation of, 474-475, 481. 484-485, 487-488.
 Child Labor Committee, false and inaccurate allegations by, 479-480, 483-484. 489.
 Child-workers investigation resolution passed by Congress and signed by President Roosevelt, 4-5.
 Children, statements by writers regarding condition of, in mills, 9-11.
 employed by cotton mills and compared with unemployed of the same age, 21, 23.
 working hours of, 35-36.
 work done by, on farms, 36-37.
 effect of idleness on, 42-43.
 employment of, held out to induce parents to leave farms, 72.
 allowed on an average two days a week out of mill, 72.
 without aptitude for education occasionally very bright at mechanical labor, 80, 83.
 desire for play lacking in, 90, 195.
 dismissed from cotton mills, superior manners of, and story told by, 229-230. 232. 234.
 frozen to death, 267.
 on farms, laziness of, 245.

- Cleveland County, N. C., beginning of mills in, 452-453.
 Chilhowee Mountains, Tenn., visit to, 249-261.
 Clay eating, 182, 263, 437.
 Cliffside, N. C., mill at, 451.
 improvement of, through establishment of a mill, 451-452.
 Clyde, N. C., alleged migration of people from, to mills in South Carolina, 56-57.
 Commissioner of Labor, opinion of, on child labor, 292.
 demurred at assigning author to work, 6.
 in printed address referred to "the palid, over-worked, stunted child of the mill," 9.
 reason for refusing to accept author's finding, 468.
 reference to certain business men as pirates, 474.
 Community workers, lack of accurate knowledge of, regarding mill conditions misleading to investigators, 31-33, 35.
 Corporal punishment, parents of negro children consent to, at Fayetteville silk mills, 421.
 Cotton, increase in value of, 418.
 Cows, value of, to farmers, 432.
 Columbus, Ga., G. Gunby Jordan's mill at, 437, 477.
 Cones, mill owned by, at Greensboro, N. C., 436.
 Craggy, N. C., mill at, 66.
 Crazy woman, story of, 212-213.
 Crops, uncertainty of, 170.
 Cushman, Arthur F., cotton mill investigator, affidavit of, 2-3.

D

- DALTON, GA., mill at, 455.
 Dark Corner, S. C., bad reputation of, 378-379.
 trip to, 381-398.
 stories told by people of. 387-389. 391-395.
 church, cemetery and school at, 389.
 girl mail carrier at, 393.
 Davie County, N. C., mill in, 437.
 "Dead Line," stories told of the. 378-379.
 Degeneracy, case of, described, 186.
 Devil's Fork, Tenn., bad conditions in, 182-183.
 family at, described by Presbyterian minister, 186.
 Discipline of children by parents lacking in homes, 43.
 Disease, 162. 198, 263, 309, 312, 319, 347, 423-435, 437-470.
 Doffer boys, first meeting with, at Asheville, N. C., 17.
 work required from, 18, 73, 90, 94, 138, 232.
 wages of, 73, 138.
 Durham, N. C., mill at, 437.
 Durland, Kellogg, cited by Beveridge regarding child labor, 3.

Duke, N. C., village built at, 436.
population of, 470.
work accomplished at, in five years,
470-471.

E

EARNING capacity *versus* cost of maintenance, 84.

Easley, S. C., mill at, 449.

East Tennessee, conditions in, differing from those in North Carolina, 236.

feuds in, 242.

Economics, household, 81-84.

Education, compulsory, a local issue in North Carolina, 27, 40-41, 314.

Educational problems in South before Civil War, 428.

Egypt, N. C., "Baron" of, and his family, 338, 341-342.
partiality of people of, for gay colors, 339.

income and expenditure of family in, 343-345.

land owned by a family in, 345.

family of a widow in, 347-348.

accounts of superior young man in, 350.

Elk Mountain, N. C., bankruptcy of a mill in, 278.

Erwin, Will, co-operates with Dukes in mill building, 436-437.

Expenditures by families in mills and on farms, 48, 83, 333-334.

F

FAMILY, improvement of, after six months at mill, 444, 446.

Farm life. See *Opinions.*

Farm work *versus* mill work, 35-36.

Farming, conditions under which carried on, 81-82.

Farms, poverty on, and reasons therefore, 36.

comparison of, with those in New England, 142.

bought with mill savings, 459.

Father, drunken, care of small children for, 269.

Fathers not so idle as alleged, 74, 76, 136-137.

Fees, dishonest methods of county officials to increase 171-172.

Flag, American, 111, 195.

Food, 33, 35, 39, 46-47, 90-92, 159-160, 162, 168, 180, 201, 203, 252, 306, 322-323, 334, 357, 401.

improvement of, in Taylorsville, N. C., 93.

Franklin-Tweed feud, 173-174.

Furniture, 32, 35, 47, 81, 167, 259, 333, 353.

G

GASTON COUNTY, N. C., an example of what mills have done for poor, 461-462, 464-466.
statistics of, 466-470.

Gastonia, N. C., mills at, 25, 464-465, 467.

Girls stop mill work after marriage, 74.

Gooch family in North Carolina, 450.

Graniteville, S. C., mill at, 426, 438, 440.

Greenville County, S. C., statistics of, 418.

H

HAMILTON, GEORGE, owner of mills at Dalton, Ga., 455-457.

Hanks, Nancy, tradition concerning, 271-272.

Harnett County, N. C., Will Erwin builds mill in, 436.

Hauling, method of, 321.

Hayden boys, lawlessness of, 241.

Henderson County, N. C., establishment of mill in, improves people, 471-472.

Hendersonville, N. C., 262, 378.

Henrietta, N. C., mill at, 451.

Hensley family, 338, 341, 352-355, 387-388.

Will Ann, cost of house of, 352.

High Falls, N. C., mill at, 442.

High Shoals, N. C., misrepresentation of mill conditions at, 460.

Hine, Lewis W., quotation from, regarding child labor, 110-111.

Homes, description of, 32, 77-78, 156-157, 159, 162, 172, 175, 188, 194, 203, 227, 251-252, 259, 309, 332-333, 341, 343, 350, 398, 401.

improved surroundings of, indicative of rapid rise of mill workers, 49.

owned by some mill workers at Knoxville, Tenn., 228.

Hospitality, 92-93, 166, 184, 197, 401.

Hotel accommodations at Peizer, S. C., 99, 101.

Hotels, charges at, 95, 208.

Hot Springs, N. C., 173, 324.

Howard family, 394-396, 398.

Hubbard, Elbert, cited by Beveridge regarding child labor, 3.
quotation from, 471.

Huntsville, Ala., mills and conditions at, 459-460.

I

ILLEGITIMACY, 33, 149, 267.

Illiteracy, 24, 38-39, 61, 65, 81, 130.

Immorality, 198-199, 244.

differing conditions of, in mills and on farms, 237.

Incomes and expenditures of mill families, 64-65, 234-235.

Industrial prosperity induced by building of Piedmont mills, 407-408.
conditions in South before Civil War, 426.

Infant mortality, 319.

Institutions for care of juvenile delinquents not yet organized in North Carolina, 40.

Investigation of woman and child labor, welcomed by mill-owners, 52.
\$300,000 appropriated for, 5.

K

KELLY, MRS. cited by Beveridge regarding child labor, 3.
Kindergarten. See LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS.
"King of Pelzer" sobriquet of president of mills at Pelzer, S. C., 102.
Knoxville, Tenn., opposition to child labor in, 223-224.
history of mill superintendent at, 225-227.

L

LABOR, demand for, greater than supply, 71.
method of obtaining, when new mills are opened, 71-72.
organizers, hostility of mill workers toward, 102-103.
unions, 71.
Laborers, adult, cannot be trained like children, 72.
La Follette, Robert, comments of, on child labor, 479.
Lanette, Ala., mill school at, free to others also, 483.
Law in North Carolina prohibiting agents from taking labor from the State, 12.
Lawrence, Mass., incidents in strike at, 480.
Leak, Joe, opinion of, regarding local problems at Sodom, 370-371.
Ledford family, 314.
Legislation against woman and child labor shown to be harmful, 135-136.
Lewiston, Me., Cushman's report on cotton mills at, 2-3.
Liberty, S. C., mill at, 449.
Lien law, 384-385.
Loafers between seventeen and twenty-one in mill villages, 76-77, 79-80.
Lovejoy, Owen R., cited by Beveridge regarding child labor, 3.
Low Gap, N. C., religious conditions at, 368, 374, 376.
Ludlow, Mass., incidents in strike at, 480.

M

MADISON COUNTY, N. C., bad reputation of, 129, 263.
one of the best sources for supply of mill labor, 262.
a chief source for labor supply to Southern mills in recent years, 142.
Manufacturing interests, prejudice against, 488.
Marriage contracted merely as protective measure, 244.
Marshall, N. C., moonshiners at, 132.
growth of, 125-126, 128.

Marshall, N. C., information regarding county, history and people in and around, 115-119, 154-181.
anecdotes of people heard in hotel at, 120-122, 124.
educational work in, 126, 148-149.
history of cotton mill at, 126-128.
80% of wage earners women and children in mill at, 129.
economic condition of, improved by cotton mill, 140.
total tax for a year paid by, 140-141.
Marriages, early, 162.
Mathis, family of semi-nomads in North Carolina, 270-274.
McCurry, Jim, farmer at Egypt, N. C., 345, 347.
McKelway, A. J., cited by Beveridge 479.
regarding child labor, 3.
erroneous statements by, 56-57, 114.
Medical attendance, crudity of, among mountaineers, 162, 213, 330.
Medlin, N. C., nearly whole population of, sent to mill in Georgia, but returned as too lazy to work, 274.
Men, old, employed as watchmen, yardmen, bale openers, sweepers and truckmen in mill towns, 76.
Metcalf family ("little-eyed Madcaps") of North Carolina, peculiarity of, 331.
their life, income and expenditure at mills, 336-337.
Mica mines, 209.
Mills, owners of, reported attempting to hide children from investigators, 11.
management of, secures and trains raw help from the farms, 12.
generally provide for their own poor, 33.
owners of, furnish houses, furniture and rations to new employees, 35.
conducive to acquirement of regular habits by children, 44.
employees of, rapid progress of, 49.
development of, causes migration for higher wages, 49.
development of employees of, begins with increased wants and realization of the purchasing power of money, 49.
labor in, a descent in social scale only in rare instances, 50.
work in, preferred by the younger generation to farming, 65.
rent of cottages at, 95.
migrations to, 196.
benefit of, shown by family history 225-227.
of superintendent at Knoxville, endeavor to get the best rural element to labor, 227.
rapid advance of workers in, 227-228.
improve condition of people even after return to farm, 247.

Mills, operation of, in south, began with child labor, 409.
tend to encourage extravagance, 262-263, 278.
trained workers from, found in higher occupations, 438.
solve problem of education and care of mountaineers, 429.
records of advancement of children in, in later life, 456-457.
Mine Fork, N. C., visit to, 203.
Mingus Creek, N. C., a haunt of the Mathis family, 270.
Minors between fourteen and sixteen must work or attend school, 41.
Misrepresentations of mountain whites frequently made through failure to understand them, 13. 143-145.
of child labor, 477, 479-481, 484.
Mission schools, failure of, to reach the very poor, 149.
workers, discouragement of, 326-327.
Missions, foreign, money solicited in mountains for, 144, 217.
Presbyterian, work of, 159-160.
Mitchell County, N. C., incomes of people in, 307-308, 310, 312.
topography of, 308.
cabins owned in, 310.
lack of medical attendance in outlying districts of, 310, 312.
first settlement and growth of, 314.
Moore County, N. C., description of mill employees in, 443-444.
Monticello Mills, Ark., history of superintendent of, 456.
Moonshine whiskey said to contain lye, 251.
obtained in Dark Corner, S. C., by author, 398.
Moonshiners, stories of, 405.
Mortality among first mill workers, 422.
Mothers of mill children taught to sew at Asheville, 23.
Mountain people, statement by minister regarding condition of, 152.
preacher, 219-220.
travel, incidents of, 317-318.
Mountaineers sensitive about misrepresentations of them, 143-145, 211.
divided into four classes, 198.
intelligence of, 164.
Muck-rakers and labor delegates in South, 409-410.
Murphy, N. C., hotel at, 274, 276.
town commissioners of, assist labor agents to take labor out of State, 276.
characteristics of a poor family of, 276-277.

N

NEGROES very few in mountains of North Carolina and objected to in certain localities, 13.
not permitted to live in Rock Creek Township, N. C., 211-212.
social superiority of, over poor whites, 420-421.

Night school for mill children at Asheville, 25.
at Belmont, N. C. 464.
Noise in weave room at Asheville seems not to disturb workers, 20.
North Carolina and Tennessee, hostile feeling existing between, 118.
Norton family, 176-177.

O

OATH, citizen, prevents owner of Taylorsville mills from breaking age limit law, 93-94.
Oglethorpe's colonists, descendants of, still found in Georgia, 277.
Olmstead, F. L., quoted, 216-217, 426.
Operatives, long hours of, at Taylorsville, N. C., 94.
Opinions on cotton-mill life *versus* farm life, 45, 61-64, 67, 136, 184, 202, 217, 219, 221, 243, 259, 278, 385.
Orphan asylums in North Carolina unsupported by State, 40.
O'Steen, Dick, story of progress of family of, at Piedmont mills, 415-416.

P

PANIC in New York. effect of, on mills in South, 278.
Pardons granted by state governors, 241.
Parent, first trial of, under law for not sending children to school, 41-42.
Parents, opinions of, regarding duration of time for work of children, 35, 63.
treatment received from mill owners, 37, 50, 82.
complain against age limit, 91.
work only long enough to keep children from actual starvation, 245.
Pate, Lifus, bad reputation of, himself and family, 329-331, 364.
Pate, Parson, preaches at Low Gap, N. C., 363-364, 368-369.
Pattersons, description of mills built by, 436.
Pelzer, S. C., president of mills at, said to be a despot, 99.
representations against, 99.
refuse to see the author, 103.
homes at, not of low status, 104-105, 109.
progress of people at, 107.
description of alleged worst home at, 108.
welfare work at, 109.
exercises in schools at, 110-111, 113.
population and admirable features of, 114.
Pensioners of Civil War, 342.
Pickens County, S. C., mills and work in, 448.
Piedmont Mills, S. C., story of, 408-418.
percentage of increase of population about, 417-418.

Pisen Field, a school district of Sodom, N. C., 361.
 Poe Mills, S. C., ice factory at, 436.
 Poor, improved condition of, 246.
 Poverty, laziness, indolence and idleness, causes of, 33, 43, 93, 215, 224, 244, 342.
 instance of, 323.
 Pritchard, Judge, speech of, in behalf of prohibition, 146.
 quoted, 215.

R

RACE suicide, 186.
 Redmond, an outlaw of Pickens County, S. C., 448.
 Rentals, 32, 95, 168, 214-215.
 Report of young women suppressed by Bureau of Labor, 440.
 Revenue officer, belief of, in good influence of mills, 237.
 "Rhyne, Popsy," builder of first mill in Gaston County, N. C., 462, 466.
 Rice's Creek, a school district of Sodom, N. C., 361.
 Rifles of State National Guard, S. C., company of, composed of Pelzer mill boys, 113.
 Riverside Club at Asheville mill, 25-26.
 Rock Creek, N. C., bad reputation of, 211.
 characteristics of people living at, 211.
 Rome, Ga., mill conditions at, 454.
 Roosevelt, Theodore, misrepresentations of mill conditions by, based on false information, 474-476.
 Root gathering followed as an occupation, 215.
 Rural districts, condition of people in, described by photographer, 68, 70.
 Rutherford County, N. C., mills in, 449,

S

SAMPSON COUNTY, N. C., 470.
 Sanitary arrangements, lack of, in rural districts, 198, 312.
 Schedules, adequacy and inadequacy of, 51-52.
 compiled from ignorant and unreliable information useless, 53-54.
 examples of uselessness of, to meet needs of investigation, 289, 291.
 School attendance, comparisons of, 468, records, 380.
 law at Asheville, 27, 40-41, 43.
 teachers, lack of attention of, to poor children a cause of illiteracy, 39.
 salaries of, 140.
 stories of pupils told by, 268-269.
 assaulted by hoodlums, 321.
 Schools, children allowed time from mills to attend, 64.
 too far distant for children to attend, 312, 314.
 lack of discipline in, 314.

Schenk, Major, beginning of his mill at Lowndale, N. C., 452.
 Seabrook, Gov., quotation from a message to the Legislature of, 426.
 Sellers, Rev. Pink, 365, 367.
 Shelton family, 170, 364.
 account of, 177-179.
 burying-ground of, 176.
 Shelton-Laurelites, anecdotes of, 172-173, 183.
 "Sheriff," owner of mill at Taylorsville, 88, 94.
 description of home of, 92.
 views of, on child labor, etc., 93.
 Sheriff's office, rules of, 171.
 Slasher machine, women and children not employed at, 90.
 Social lines strictly drawn by parents of children of the better class, 242.
 Sodom, N. C., boundaries of, 356.
 school district of, 361.
 quaint people met by author at, 361-365, 368.
 mission workers at, 364.
 clergyman at, admits failure of missionary work, 372.
 Baptist seminary at, 372.
 corn mill at, 373.
 name of, officially changed to Reviere, 374.
 South Carolina, condition of, after Civil War, 405-406.
 Governor Adams of, urges appointment of State Superintendent of Education in 1855, 428.
 Southern Commercial Convention, quotation from speech before, 426.
 Snuff, 24, 56, 162, 179, 182, 252, 344, 362-363, 365.
 Spargo, John, cited by Beveridge regarding child labor, 3.
 Speech by Senator Beveridge, resumé of, 1-4.
 Speeders, only adults employed at, 19-20.
 Spicer's Cove, N. C., bad reputation of, due to Spicer families, 380.
 Spinners, adult and children. receive same wages for same work, 73.
 capacity of, for work, 73.
 wages of, 73, 138.
 Spinning frames, description of, 18.
 Spruce Pine, N. C., 212.
 Stanley, N. C., mill contributes to support of school in, 280.
 State Deaf and Dumb School, all defective children sent to, in North Carolina, 347.
 State Rescue Homes, work and rules of, 149-152.
 Stiles, Dr. Charles Wardell, suppression of report of, 476-477.
 Stonewall, Miss., mill conditions at, 434.
 "Survey, The," misrepresentations published in, 459.
 Strikes, 71.
 Sylva, N. C., Methodist minister at, sceptical of value of mountain missionary work and advocate of cotton mills, 264.

Sylva, N. C., poverty and vice at, 264, 266.
 mayor of, sends family to cotton mill as solution for abject poverty, 267.

T

TAXES, 171, 209, 315, 345.
 Taylorsville. N. C., courteous treatment of author in, 85-88.
 robust health of people in, 87.
 description of land and houses in mill district of, 88.
 mill at, visited, 90.
 mill owner at, welcomes inspection of his mill, 92.
 type of men and women around, 92, 96.
 hour schedule in mill at, 94.
 night force in mill at, contains only three boys and six girls under sixteen, 94.
 cost of living in, 95.
 only one family in, of as low social grade as in Asheville, 95.
 characteristics of people in, 96-98.
 minister of church at, 97.
 Tenant farmers, restrictions on, 169.
 Tennessee and North Carolina, hostile feeling existing between, 118.
 denotes districts by numbers only, 181.
 Thompson, Col., signer of decree of South Carolina's secession from the Union, a resident of Walhalla, S. C., 446-447.
 Tobacco, 21, 23-24, 44, 162, 182, 342, 344, 362-363.
 Toe River, N. C., description of country about, 204-206.
 Townsend, Tenn., visit to, 240-243.
 Truant officer, trip with, 42-50.
 Truth, example of suppression of, 438, 440.
 Tryon, N. C., interview with mayor of, 262
 physician at, believes mills improve conditions of the poor, 263.
 Tuscaleechee, Tenn., visit to family at, 239-240, 243-248.
 Tweed family, 165-166, 173-174.

V

VAGRANT families on outskirts of towns in East Tennessee, 236.
 Van Vorst, Mrs., cited by Beveridge regarding child labor, 3.

Vegetables, lack of, throughout rural districts, 95.
 Voting, side light on, 424-425.

W

WAGES, 71.
 amount of, paid to children in mills, 39, 72, 74, 232, 268, 450.
 same scale of, for women and children, 39.
 unwisely spent, 46, 48.
 comparison of, earned by different members of same family, 82-83.
 versus earnings, 83.
 lower at Taylorsville, but living conditions better, 95.
 comparison of those of mill children with those of district school teachers, 140.
 data regarding, juggled in Bureau of labor to prove prejudged theories, 287-288.
 Wainwright, T. L., story of white girls working for African, 434.
 Walhalla, S. C., settled by German colonists, 446.
 mill at, 447-448.
 Watson, E. J., excerpt from report of, 111.
 Weave-room at Asheville, 20.
 Weavers apparently not disturbed by din of machinery, 20.
 wages of, 72.
 Welfare work, 24-26, 430-434, 436-437, 440, 454-455.
 Whaley, Alma, sensational misrepresentation regarding attempted suicide of, 476.
 Whiskey, story of woman who sold illicit, 327.
 "White Caps" of Sevier County, Tenn., organized, 245-246.
 Woman and child workers investigation resolution signed by Roosevelt, 4-5.
 Women, work done by, on farms, 36.
 apparent ages of, deceptive, 38.
 laziness of, 48-49, 156, 193.
 Woody family, 442.
 Workers, charity, lack of appreciation for, 33.

Y

YANCEY COUNTY, N. C., topography of, 338.



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